

CRITICAL ESSAYS

CONTRIBUTED TO

THE ECLECTIC REVIEW,

BY

JOHN FOSTER,

AUTHOR OF "ESSAYS ON DECISION OF CHARACTER, &C, &C

EDITED BY

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P R E F A C E.

THESE volumes are, for the most part, a reprint of the "Contributions, Biographical, Literary, and Philosophical to the *Eclectic Review*, by John Foster, &c.," edited by my friend Dr. Price, in 1844.

Dr. Price, in his preface, after giving some account of the establishment and original constitution of the *Eclectic Review*, informs us that, "Mr. Foster's connexion with the *Review* commenced in 1806, his first paper being published in the November of that year. From this period, to the close of 1818, he was a stated and frequent contributor; after which he remitted his labours in this direction, furnishing only thirteen papers from 1819 to 1828, inclusive.

"On the journal passing into the hands of the present Editor in January, 1837, he made application to Mr. Foster for literary assistance, and was authorized to announce him as one of the stated contributors to the work. The impaired condition of his health did not, however, permit him to do much. An occasional article was all that could be looked for, the fastidiousness of his taste concurring with the cause just named, to indispose him to frequent composition. His last contribution appeared in October, 1839, when, however, the prospect was held out of still further aid.

"This prospect was unhappily not realized, though the conditional promise was renewed from time to time. Writing to the Editor, January 28, 1841, Mr. Foster says,—'With my almost total want of memory, and miserable slowness in any sort of composition, I am many degrees below the mark for anything of material account—anything requiring much reading or laborious consideration. As to long reading, my eyes have their veto, and if I *had* read any considerable book, I should, when I closed it, be just in the plight of Nebuchadnezzar with his dream—*minus* the resource of any one to call in as a substitute for Daniel.'"

In this new edition the Reviews have been printed in chronological order, without any attempt at classification. Running titles have been added; which will in some measure answer the purpose of an analysis, by directing the reader at a glance to the principal topic of discussion; and in order as much as possible to give to these compositions the form of Essays, a general title, whenever prac-

ticable, has been substituted for that of the book under review.

Several articles will be found in these volumes which were not inserted in Dr. Price's Edition. In point of intellectual ability, it is believed that they are not at all inferior to the others, while their subjects will add to the interest and variety of the work; some of them will serve to show more distinctly Mr. Foster's taste for Antiquities and the Fine Arts, to which, perhaps, justice has not yet been done by the brief notices in his Biography.* On the other hand, a few articles have been omitted, chiefly relating to Indian Missions, which possessed but a temporary interest; a sufficient number, however, on that subject, are retained, to be a memorial of the powerful manner in which he advocated missionary efforts and the principles of religious toleration, at a period when they were assailed with a virulence and coarseness not likely we may, hope ever to be repeated. Since that time, the religious and social relations of India have been undergoing great changes, of which "the end is not yet." Though Christianity must still, as ever, maintain a militant attitude, its assailants are generally of a different order from the "Bengal Officers" and "Scott-Warings," whose literary castigation from Mr. Foster's pen can only be paralleled by that inflicted on their prototypes, Thersites and Irus, by the brawny arm of Ulysses.

In conclusion, these Critical Essays are once more presented to the public with the confident persuasion that (to use Dr. Price's words) "in all the higher and more permanent qualities of intellect, in their largeness of view, penetrating subtlety of thought, deep insight into human nature, and sympathy with the nobler and more lofty forms of spiritual existence, they will be found eminently worthy of the genius of their author, and subserve to his permanent repute."

J. E. RYLAND.

WORTHAMPTON,
October, 1856.

* Life and Correspondence, Vol. II., pp. 289, 293. Bohn's edition.

CONTENTS OF VOL. I.

	PAGE
ON TRAVEL WRITING.	
Carr's Stranger in Ireland.— <i>November and December, 1806</i> . . .	1
ON MEMOIR WRITING.	
*Forbes's Life of Beattie.— <i>January and February, 1807</i> . . .	17
THOUGHTS ON AFFECTATION.	
* Thoughts on Affectation, by a Lady.— <i>February, 1807</i> . . .	34
THE FUTURE OF ENGLAND AND AMERICA.	
* The Stranger in America.— <i>June, 1807</i>	44
ON MEMOIR WRITING.	
Memoirs of Lord Kames.— <i>July and August, 1807</i>	63
ON BLAIR'S LIFE AND WRITINGS.	
* Characteristics of his Sermons.— <i>December, 1807</i>	81
ON DAVID HUME.	
* Life and Writings of David Hume, Esq., by Thomas Edward Ritchie.— <i>January, 1808</i>	95
HINDOO IDOLATRY AND CHRISTIANITY.	
* Vindication of the Hindoos, by a Bengal Officer.— <i>March, 1808</i> .	110
VINDICATION OF THE BAPTIST MISSIONARIES.	
* Scott-Waring's Letters on India.— <i>May, 1808</i>	132
ON POETICAL CRITICISM.	
* Stockdale's Lectures on the English Poets.— <i>March, 1808</i> . .	144
ON PERSONAL VIRTUE IN ITS RELATION TO POLITICAL EMINENCE.	
Fox's History of the Reign of James II.— <i>September, 1808</i> . .	157
ON STATESMEN.	
* Lives of British Statesmen, by John MacDiarmid, Esq.— <i>October and November, 1808</i>	189
MÉMOIRES OF SIR THOMAS MORE.	
* Memoirs of Sir Thomas More, by A. Cayley, Esq.— <i>December, 1808</i>	217
CHRISTIANITY IN INDIA.	
* Cunningham's Essay.— <i>December, 1808</i>	227

	PAGE
ON PALEY AS A THEOLOGIAN.	
Paley's Sermons.— <i>January</i> , 1809	236
AMERICA BEFORE THE REVOLUTION.	
• Memoirs of an American Lady.— <i>February</i> , 1809	251
ON THE PENINSULAR WAR.	
• Chronicle of the Cid, by Robert Southey— <i>March</i> , 1809	264
SYDNEY SMITH'S SERMONS.	
Sermons, by Rev. Sydney Smith, M.A.— <i>May and June</i> , 1809	285
PALEY'S MEMOIRS.	
Memoirs of William Paley, D.D., by G. W. Meadley.— <i>June</i> , 1809	315
ROSE ON FOX'S HISTORY.	
Observations on Fox's History, by the Right Hon. George Rose— <i>July</i> , 1809	329
ON THEATRICAL AMUSEMENTS.	
Plumtre's Four Discourses.— <i>November</i> , 1809	343
CHARACTERS OF FOX.	
Characters of Fox, by Philopatra Varvicensis.— <i>December</i> , 1809	358
EDUCATION IN REFERENCE TO RELIGION.	
Edgeworth's Essays.— <i>January and February</i> , 1810	372
SANSKRIT LITERATURE.	
The Ramayana of Valmeeki.— <i>September</i> , 1810	400
THE MORALITY OF WORKS OF FICTION.	
Tales of Fashionable Life, by Miss Edgeworth.— <i>October</i> , 1810	417
ON CRUELTY TO ANIMALS.	
Mr. Windham's Speech on Cruelty to Animals.— <i>November</i> , 1810	428
SOUTHEY'S CURSE OF KEHAMA.	
The Curse of Kehama, by Robert Southey.— <i>March and April</i> , 1811	453
VINDICATION OF FOX'S HISTORY.	
A Vindication of Fox's History, by Samuel Heywood.— <i>December</i> , 1811	495
JESSE'S SERMONS.	
Sermons, by William Jesse, M.A.— <i>April</i> , 1812	515



CRITICAL ESSAYS.

ON TRAVEL-WRITING.

The Stranger in Ireland; or, a Tour in the Southern and Western Parts of that Country, in the Year 1805. By JOHN CARR, Esq. 4to. 1806.

MR CARR is a traveller whom any sensible observer would like to accompany a few hundred miles. He possesses, in perfection, one qualification, for which many men who have more curiosity than spirit or address, will envy him, and very justly envy him; a happy mixture of confidence, adroitness, and insinuation. By means of this he obtains access to every place and every person without the smallest difficulty. The moment he arrives at any place as a perfect stranger, he seems to inform himself of everything which it would be desirable to inspect, and the next moment he is introduced to the object of curiosity as readily as if he had lived on the spot twenty years, and knew every person there. He enters with equal ease the peasant's cabin, the country ale-house, the city-hotel, and the splendid mansion of nobility. No apprehensive awkwardness detains him at the gate of a great man's house, hesitating some minutes before he ventures to ring the bell, as many a poor scholar, or rustic man of taste, and even many a philosopher would do, while he tried to inspirit himself by recollecting the maxims of Epictetus, or the noble sentiments of modern doctors on the subject of the equality of mankind. He presents himself with an air perfectly unembarrassed, and the "pampered menial" skips along the hall to announce, he has no doubt, some old familiar acquaintance of my lord. If, on the introduction, my lord should amidst his complaisance, show any little degree of grave doubtful inquisitiveness, Mr.

Carr advances with such a frank and gallant air, that formal ceremony is ashamed to stay in the room, and quickly takes itself off.

The travelling vehicles in some parts of Ireland are justly described as miserable conveyances, and there is many a worthy English gentleman that would deny himself the sight of the most beautiful scenes, if he must visit them under the pains and penalties of being jammed, and rattled, and tossed, and stared at, in a jungle, a noddy, or a jaunting car. Our author, though no stranger to the luxury of easy or splendid carriages, was capable of very properly despising a temporary inconvenience, if any gratification of his taste for the beautiful or the sublime was to be obtained by enduring it. And though a connoisseur in matters of good living, and especially an excellent judge of wines, he could make himself very easy and pleasant over the most homely viands, in those wild situations, where it would have been absurd to complain that the hostess had not studied any large volume on the art of cookery, and had not a larder or cellar ample enough to turn such study to any great practical account. With the exception of a few such slight inconveniences, no traveller ever went on under a more continual sunshine of good fortune than Mr. Carr, according to his lively narrative. The "Green Island" seems to have arrayed itself in all its beauties to receive him, and the utmost politeness of its inhabitants met him at every stage. Nor did these gratifying circumstances fail to produce the due effect on the traveller, whose good-humour would appear to have been but very few times interrupted. This good-humour sparkles out in a continual series of light pleasantries; and though we would not harshly censure the society which an extensive view of an unhappy nation did not repress, yet we cannot help thinking that a philanthropy of the most elevated kind would occasionally have been pensive, where Mr. Carr is very sprightly; and that a refined love of justice would have been severe and indignant, in a few instances in which he is extremely tolerant.

Mr. Carr's intellectual qualifications are well adapted to that kind of travelling which the present volume exhibits. He does not survey a country with a view to form or illustrate moral or political theories, or to select the physical

subjects of scientific investigation. It is not in the particular character of naturalist, virtuoso, antiquarian, or statesman, that he travels, nor exactly in the character of philosopher, but simply in that of a man of sense and taste, who wishes fairly to see and hear whatever is most deserving of attention, and to write a spirited description and narration of what he happens to observe. We certainly could have wished, on some occasions, a little more grave research, at the same time that we deprecate that pedantry which cannot make a remark without extending it into a dissertation. It is with a very ill will, we own, that we accompany a traveller, who regularly at every town he comes to, or at every old heap of stones near the road, plants himself in form to make a long speech. Mr. Carr generally seizes with quickness and accuracy the characteristic peculiarities of the people, and of local situations, while he passes from place to place with a celerity which gives us the idea of scampering.

In the preface, and in several other parts of the book, he takes pains to apprise the reader, that none of his observations on the state of Ireland are to be construed as referring to political questions, or as intimating any kind of opinion on the causes of the late melancholy events in that country. Probably, this is a well-judged forbearance in a work like the present. But we earnestly wish that some liberal Englishman, who has been long conversant with mankind and with the speculations relating to their interests, who is equally free from superstitious veneration for old practices and from a rage for novelty and hazardous experiments, who is pure from the infection of party interest, and dares to arraign indifferently any party or every party at the bar of absolute justice, would traverse Ireland expressly with a view to form a comprehensive estimate of the moral and political condition and wants of the people; and then present to the public the assemblage of facts, together with the observations which he had been most prompted to make while those facts were before him.

The first chapter narrates the journey from London (as it should seem) to the entrance of the Bay of Dublin, and it makes us perfectly acquainted with the dispositions of the traveller. Our readers never met with a more gay and animated gentleman in their lives. He never lets himself

be long disconcerted by untoward circumstances. If for a moment his indignation is excited by "those detestable, corrupt harpies called custom-house officers," he almost immediately forgets them. And even the pains of sympathy, which he sometimes feels, do not become troublesome to the reader, by producing long sentimental declamations. The tragical objects which occasionally interrupt the course of his pleasantry, do not in the least haunt him afterwards. Though decorously serious, or at least demure, in the house of mourning, he can laugh, dance, and sing, as soon as he has quitted it.

The first chapter is marked by almost all the characteristics which distinguish Mr. Carr's manner of writing travels. The descriptions are quick, clear, and lively. He marks so well the prominent circumstances of each situation or society, that he really makes his reader his companion; and this we deem very high praise. At the same time we are disposed to complain, that he rather too often introduces from his memory, at the suggestion of some very slight association of thought, stories which might quite as well have been put in any other part of the book, or in no part of it. These may sometimes be curious in themselves, like the circumstance of Mr. Bolton's wager at Paris (p. 6), and might do very well to keep up the chat with his associates in the coach; but the reader of a costly book of travels will not be so patient. He wants information strictly relating to the place which the traveller has thought it worth while to visit and describe; and can find miscellaneous anecdotes at any time, in any old volume of a magazine. We might complain too, that our author's lavish eulogiums of all the people of rank that happen to be civil to him, have sometimes made us a little splenetic. We certainly are pleased with his good fortune in meeting so luckily with my Lady Tuite, &c. &c.; and with his pathetic gratitude for slices of broiled mutton (especially as it was Welsh mutton), most seasonably given him when he was nearly famished in the packet; but when we are told he made on the instant a solemn vow that all his readers should be informed of this most rare bounty, we cannot but wish his conscience had permitted him to break it. We have a better opinion of Mr. Carr, than to think that if Pat M'Canu, or Judith M'Nabb, or some such responsible per-

sonage, had divided the little stock of provisions with him, he would not have been *grateful*; but we greatly doubt whether he would have been so *eloquent*.

Now and then we meet with matters so trivial, that we are sorry a man of sense should have condescended to record them; for instance, the story about the boots (p. 24). Nothing can tend more effectually to bring the writing of travels into contempt, than to occupy splendid quarto pages with incidents which a company of louts at a pot-house must be reduced to a very great scarcity of subjects before any of them would think it worth while to mention. Our author is so determined from the outset, to have something *funny*, every few pages at least, that he will pick up the slightest facts or the slenderest witticisms for that purpose, rather than go soberly on his journey. About every mile-post he stops to laugh, and insists that his readers shall join him, whether they can or not. Sometimes indeed, we readily perform our part of this ceremony; as when he mentions (p. 81), that "the secretary of a celebrated English agricultural society received orders from its committee, to procure several copies of Mr. and Miss Edgeworth's Essay on Irish Bulls, upon the first appearance of that admirable book, for the use of the members in their labours for improving the breed of cattle."

After escaping from what he calls oddly enough, "that consummation of human misery, a cabin," after a short voyage," he reaches Dublin, and frisks round a considerable part of the city before dinner, admiring, as every stranger will admire, several of the streets and squares, which are allowed to be among the noblest in Europe. His extensive previous travels enabled him to form a comparative judgment with great advantage. But these proud exhibitions of wealth and taste cease to please a humane traveller, as soon as he beholds the hideous contrast between them and the dwellings and entire condition of the poor. It is melancholy to see in the immediate neighbourhood of all this splendour, the ample proofs how little the prosperous and powerful part of mankind care for the miserable. We do not pretend to believe that the resources of the rich, and the power of the state, could banish poverty, and the whole of its attendant and consequent evils, from a great city; but it is

impossible to see such sinks of filth, such a multitude of wretched, ragged, and half-famished creatures crowded into alleys and cellars, and such a prodigious number of mendicants, without pronouncing the severest condemnation on the idle and luxurious opulence, and the strange state policy, which can preserve, year after year, a cool indifference to all this misery.

Mr Carr visited the beautiful scenes in the county of Wicklow, and we should have thought meanly of his taste, if he had adopted, in describing them, a language of less animated admiration. We should have required this language from a man the most parsimonious of strong epithets, but from our author we have a special claim to emphatical terms superlatively magnified, when speaking of grand subjects, because he sometimes applies emphatical terms, especially the word *infinite*, to very little ones. We have hinted before, that brilliant expressions are elicited from him with wonderful facility and copiousness, whenever he comes within the precincts or the apartments of an opulent villa. In page 200, he describes a visit to such a villa. the lady of which patronizes a school of industry for girls. This school it seems is in its nature a loving concern, and costs her some inconsiderable sum every year. In the contemplation of this generosity, Mr Carr is so affected, that his thoughts are transported for *once* to the joys of heaven, as the unquestionable reversion awaiting such transcendent goodness. We were half inclined to take exception to this language, as somewhat too strong for the occasion; but we stood corrected for this feeling on reading the paragraphs immediately following, which describe a magnificent and most extravagantly expensive luxury in the appendages of this mansion. That after such a consumption of money, any small sum should have been reserved for a school of industry, and that amidst such a "voluptuous" paradise, there should have been any recollection of so humble a concern, appeared to us an excess of bounty and condescension, which Mr. Carr's panegyric had too feebly applauded. But though the traveller's amiable propensity to celebrate good actions becomes peculiarly strong in the genial neighbourhood of rank and elegance, it would be unjust to deny that he is capable of discerning excellence in subordinate stations of

life. A little earlier in his book he gives an example, which we will transcribe, and we cannot help it if any reader should deem this a specimen of much more rare and costly virtue, than that which we have joined the author in admiring.

"The following little anecdote will prove that magnanimity is also an inmate of an Irish cabin. During the march of a regiment, the Honourable Captain P——, who had the command of the artillery baggage, observing that one of the peasants, whose car and horse had been pressed for the regiment, did not drive as fast as he ought, went up to him and struck him; the poor fellow shrugged up his shoulders, and observed there was no occasion for a blow, and immediately quickened the pace of his animal. Some time afterwards, the artillery officer having been out shooting all the morning, entered a cabin for the purpose of resting himself, when he found the very peasant whom he had struck, at dinner with his wife and family: the man who was very large and powerfully made, and whose abode was solitary, might have taken fatal revenge upon the officer, instead of which, immediately recognizing him, he chose the best potato out of his bowl, and presenting it to his guest, said, 'There, your honour, oblige me by tasting a potato, and I hope it is a good one, but you should not have struck me—a blow is hard to bear.'"—Pp. 150, 151.

By means of a wide diversity of narrative and anecdote, Mr. Carr furnishes a striking picture of the Irish character, as it appears in the lower ranks throughout the middle and southern parts of the country. His manner of exhibiting the national character, by means of a great assortment of well-chosen facts, and short conversations, gives a much more lively representation than any formal philosophic work, composed chiefly of general observations. At the same time, it will not be unjust to remark, that only a very small portion of toil and reflection is necessary for executing such a work. Writing travelling memoranda was a pleasant employment of many intervals and evenings, which would otherwise have been unoccupied and tedious; and, to form a volume, the author had not much more to do than to revise these memoranda, and add certain extracts from old and new books, with a few calculations and general statements. The book is such an enumeration of particulars, and series of short sketches, as a philosopher would wish to obtain in order to deduce, by abstracting the essence of the whole

mixture, a comprehensive character of the people and the country. It is like an irregular heap of materials which the artist must melt together, in order to cast one complete and well-proportioned figure.

It will be obvious to the readers of this volume, that the Irish people have a national character widely different from that of the English. And it will be the utmost want of candour, we think, to deny that they are equal to any nation on the earth, in point of both physical and intellectual capability. A liberal system of government, and a high state of mental cultivation, would make them the Athenians of the British empire. By what mystery of iniquity, or infatuation of policy, has it come to pass, that they have been doomed to unalterable ignorance, poverty, and misery, and reminded one age after another of their dependence on a protestant power, sometimes by disdainful neglect, and sometimes by the infliction of plagues. The temper of our traveller is totally the reverse of any thing like querulousness or fiction, but he occasionally avows, both in sorrow and in anger, the irresistible impression made, by what he witnessed, on an honest, and we believe we may say, generous mind. He clearly sees that the lower order of the people, whatever might be their disposition, have, in the present state of things, absolutely no power to redeem themselves from their deplorable degradation. Without some great, and as yet unattempted, and perhaps unprotected, plan for the relief of their pressing physical wants, they may remain another century in a situation, which a Christian and a philanthropist cannot contemplate without a grief approaching to horror. Their popery and their vice will be alleged against them; if the punishment is to be that they shall be left in that condition wherein they will inevitably continue popish and vicious still, their fate is indeed mournful, vengeance could hardly prompt a severer retribution. Mr Carr approves of the Union, and faintly expresses his hope that great benefits may yet result from it, but plainly acknowledges that a very different system of practical administration must be adopted, before Ireland can have any material cause to be grateful for this important measure.

It is a particular excellence of the book before us, that the diversified facts are so well exhibited, as to enable the

reader to delineate for himself, without any further assistance of the author, the principal features of the Irish character; insomuch that were he to visit Ireland, he would find that the previous reading of the book had made him completely at home in that country. The author, however, was willing to give a short abstract of his scattered estimates of Irish qualities, in the following summary. Allowing that the national character does really comprise these properties, we must however think that impartial justice would more strongly have marked some of the vices, which considerably shade this constellation of fine qualities.

"With few materials for ingenuity to work with, the peasantry of Ireland are most ingenious, and with adequate inducements, laboriously indefatigable; they possess, in general, personal beauty and vigour of frame; they abound with wit and sensibility, though all the avenues to useful knowledge are closed against them; they are capable of forgiving injuries, and are generous even to their oppressors; they are sensible of superior merit, and submissive to it; they display natural urbanity in rags and penury, are cordially hospitable, ardent for information, social in their habits, kind in their disposition, in gaiety of heart and genuine humour unrivalled, even in their superstition presenting a union of pleasantry and tenderness; warm and constant in their attachments, faithful and incorruptible in their engagements; innocent, with the power of sensual enjoyment perpetually within their reach; observant of sexual modesty, though crowded within the narrow limits of a cabin; strangers to a crime which reddens the cheek of manhood with horror; tenacious of respect; acutely sensible of, and easily won by kindnesses. Such is the peasantry of Ireland: I appeal not to the affections or the humanity, but to the justice of every one to whom chance may direct these pages, whether men so constituted present no character which a wise government can mould to the great purpose of augmenting the prosperity of the country, and the happiness of society. Well might Lord Chesterfield, when Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, exclaim, 'God has done everything for this country, man nothing.'"—Pp. 292, 293.

The author gives plenty of specimens of the ignorance, the fanaticism, the legends, and the superstition, of the lowest rank of the people; and while we read them, we are indignant at the insinuation which occurs, we think more than once, against the wisdom or necessity of a

proselyting spirit on the part of the protestants. The view of such a state of the human mind ought to incite all pious protestants to move heaven and earth, if it were possible, to annihilate that monster of error and corruption which produces and sanctions, and will perpetuate in every country where it continues to prevail, that degradation of which the ignorant Irish are an example. But we cannot help perceiving, in several passages of the present volume, that our sprightly traveller is disposed to regard revelation itself as rather a light matter; we cannot wonder, therefore, at his being unconscious how important is the difference between an erroneous faith and worship, and the true. One of these passages is in page 33: "In God's name let the Peruvians derive themselves from the sun; let the Chinese boast of the existence of their empire eight thousand years before the creation of the world according to our calculation, &c." If a man really holds the opinion implied in such expressions as these (the palpable profaneness of which, too, deserves the severest condemnation), we ought not to be surprised, that in the same volume or chapter the reclaiming of bogs is represented as an object to be strenuously promoted, and the reclaiming of miserable papists as an object for which it betrays some defect of judgment to show any great degree of zeal. Yet, on recollection, we *do* a little wonder that Mr. Carr, though he should set aside all considerations of purely religious advantage, here or hereafter, should not see the importance, in relation to *political economy*, of the lower order being raised to that decent state of intellectual and moral improvement which there is not the smallest chance of their attaining while under the influence of a superstition which governs them by besotting them. While, however, we condemn such indifference, especially when indifference affects the character of superior wisdom, we equally condemn all corrupt and all violent methods of advancing the protestant cause. It is not by tempting the conscience of the papist with a pitiful sum of money, nor by forcibly interrupting the follies of his public worship, nor by making him, for the sake of his religion, the subject of continual derision, nor by unnecessarily excluding him from any advantage, that we could wish to see genuine Christianity aided in its warfare against that

wretched paganism, into which what was once religion is found degenerated among all very ignorant papists in every country. We cannot but regret that both the civil and ecclesiastical rulers of Ireland should have been, for the most part, unacquainted with all apostolical methods of attempting the conversion of the catholics. And it is melancholy that the *generality* of the ostensible ministers of religion at present in that country, should be so very little either disposed or qualified to promote this great work. We happen to know, that there are *some* brilliant exceptions to this remark, the lustre of whose character, if it cannot prevail to any distance, yet defines and exposes the obscurity which surrounds them.

Our traveller was attentive to collect any kind of useful or amusing information, respecting the several places which he visited, and respecting the country at large. He is of opinion, that Ireland is of a temperature probably more mild and equal than that of any other country. Its unrivalled verdure is owing to its western position, where its hills are the first interruption to the clouds of the Atlantic, in consequence of which the proportion of rainy weather is much greater than in England. We presume this circumstance would render it, with the advantage of an equal cultivation, more richly productive of almost all the most valuable kinds of vegetables; and Arthur Young, we recollect, has given it as his opinion, that the soil of Ireland is more fertile, acre against acre, than that of this country. The agriculture is described as considerably progressive on the whole, in spite even of the singularly hapless condition of multitudes of its most valuable labourers.

One of the most curious and interesting parts of the book is the account of the interior of the Irish bogs. In digging to a great depth in one of them, there were found three prostrate woods, one below another, and separated by successive deep strata of earth. Mr. Carr refers the investigation of these facts to more philosophic men, apparently afraid of the gravity of such inquiries; and lest even his momentary descent into the abyss of a bog-pit should have, on him or his readers, any such effect as that of the cave of Trophonius, he inspirits himself and them with a good story of an "enbalmed cobbler," once found, with all his imple-

ments about him, in one of these places. Just in this manner a bog-digger takes his glass of whiskey before he begins.

In the narration of the hasty visit to so enchanting a place as the lakes of Killarney, we were vexed that any of the pages should be occupied about such-a-one Esq., and a second Esquire, and a third, and so on. It lessens the charm of the description, in the same manner as the crowded quarter-sessions in the town spoiled in a degree the pleasure of being in the place itself. We could also have well spared the foolish lines of Swift, called "A Gentle Echo on Women."

We are, on the contrary, delighted with the little anecdote of the huntsman, who set free a poor sawn which he had caught, because the dam followed him with tones of distress. Things like this are in harmony with the exquisite and tranquil beauty of the scene. As travellers cannot relate *all* the incidents they witness or hear of in each place which they visit, it would be the part of a judicious artist to select those which most harmonize with the character of the situation. Mr. Carr wants a good deal of improvement in this point. Not that we could have the conscience to require him to suppress all the humorous anecdotes which he hears, but we really wish that, if he should ever visit another place like Killarney, he will make such a choice of facts and anecdotes, out of the whole mass which comes before him, as to aid the emotions of sublimity and beauty which are peculiarly appropriate to the place, and which the actual observer would be ashamed of himself if he did not feel as the prevailing state of his mind, while he remained amidst this magnificence of nature. We must not, however, forbear to add, that Mr. Carr does give a very pleasing account of this noble scene, notwithstanding the spirit and tone of the description are so unfortunately interrupted, when any jokes or ludicrous incidents, those literary wild-fowl in the pursuit of which our traveller is an incomparable sportsman, happen to fly across his view.

He went to Limerick and Cork, which he describes sufficiently in detail. The shocking accounts of the house of industry at Limerick, and of the house of industry and the old gaol at Cork, will sting the principal inhabitants, we hope, through very shame, to the adoption of some more

humane, more decent, and more useful regulations. On reaching Kilkenny, he found "quite a jubilee bustle in the streets." The sacred flame of charity was glowing throughout the town. It was understood that numbers of human beings were "sinking under want and misery;" and a great company of gentlemen, and other people, were convened to make a noble effort of pure Christian munificence. And in what manner, courteous reader, should you suppose the resources were to be supplied for executing the pious design? The money was obtained by means of *theatricals*, which are performed during one month every year, with an incalculable mischief, beyond all doubt, to the morals of the young people. The balance, after deducting the expenses attending the performance, is reckoned at about £200. This, as we should infer, from another item in the account, is not a fourth part of the whole sum paid for entrance into the theatre; but how much of even this smaller sum would have been contributed for the *charity*, if it had not been extracted by means of this vain and noxious amusement?

Mr. Carr seems to have visited Ireland in the capacity of character-painter to the principal inhabitants. And as the other class of artists, portrait-painters, are said to keep a number of Venuses, Adonises, Apollos, &c., within sight while at their work, so we cannot be so simple as not to suspect that this moral painter has played off the same device on those who sat, and on us who are called to inspect and admire. He meets with a certain General here, at Kilkenny, whose generous patriotism may challenge the whole empire to produce an equal. In this one instance, however, Mr. Carr does not attempt to put the trick upon us; and we are thankful to him for his honesty. He might have observed a discreet silence as to the particular proof of this unrivalled generosity, and then we should have supposed this patriotism displayed itself in —; nay, should have very deeply pondered all the forms in which it could have been displayed, and tried to ascertain which is the most generous and useful. Has he built a hospital for the lame or blind? Has he remitted his poor tenants half their rents on account of a severe season? Has he helped a great many little farmers to cultivate pieces of waste land? Or perhaps he has established large schools for the decent

education of the brats of the wild Irish. No, he has done something much nobler: he has made, each year, a large volunteer subscription, towards defraying the expense of carrying on the war. Cunning Mr. Painter! always perform in this manner; and we shall not be tempted to the sin of reviling you for having taken us in.

Our readers have often heard of the late Dean Kirwan, long celebrated for his charity sermons; and if eloquence be rightly defined the art of persuading, it would appear that he must have been one of the greatest orators of modern times; for the sums collected after his sermons, amounted in all, as we are informed by Mr. Carr, to nearly sixty thousand pounds. For purposes of mischief we have often enough had occasion to see that a mere second-rate eloquence is sufficient to obtain immensely greater sums; and we have observed human nature too long to wonder at the fact; but that a sum like the one here specified should be granted to the pleadings of *charity*, does excite our wonder we own, and also our curiosity to know the exact nature of the eloquence which had so great an effect. Mr. Carr has given several pages of specimens, which he obtained with difficulty from a reverend admirer of the Dean, who had taken them down in short-hand. But whether it be, that the writer gave a cast of expression of his own to the sentences of the speaker, or whether there was a defect of taste in selecting them, or whether they were accompanied and enforced by unequalled graces of delivery, or whether the great law of attraction exists in less force between money and its owners in Ireland than in other countries, or whatever other cause, of which we are not aware, contributed its influence, we acknowledge that we have some difficulty to comprehend how a kind of oratory so very dissimilar to the noblest models of eloquence, could produce the splendid result. These specimens too much remind us of the worst literary qualities of French oratory. The language has an artificial pomp, which is carried on, if we may so express it, at a certain uniform height above the thought, on all occasions; like the gaudy canopy of some effeminate oriental, which is still supported over him, with invariable and tiresome ceremony, whether he proceeds or stops, sleeps or wakes, rides or condescends to step on the

ground. The images seem rather to be sought than to spring in the mind spontaneously, and to be chosen rather for their splendour than their appropriateness. And the train of thinking appears to have little of that distinct succession of ideas, and that logical articulation, which are requisite to impress sound conviction on the understanding. — We fear, however, that we begin to descry one capital cause of the Dean's success, in something else than the *literary* merits of his oratory: and our readers will hardly avoid the same surmise when they read the following passage. Expressing his reverence for the man, "however he may differ in speculative opinions," who relieves the wretched, &c. &c., he proceeds, "Should such a man be ill-fated, here or hereafter, may his fate be light! Should he transgress, may his transgressions be unrecorded! Or if the page of his great account be stained with the weakness of human nature, or the misfortune of error, may the tears of the widow and the orphan, the tears of the wretched he has relieved, efface the too rigid and unfriendly characters, and blot out the guilt and remembrance of them for ever!" Now if an admired preacher, after a pathetic address to the passions of a numerous and wealthy auditory, many of whom had never accurately studied the doctrines of Christianity, *could* have the courage to proceed forward, and declare to them, in the name of heaven, that their pecuniary liberality to the claims of distress in general, and especially to the case of distress immediately before them, would secure them, notwithstanding their past and future unrepented and unrelinquished sins, from all danger of divine condemnation; intimating also, that, on the extreme and improbable supposition that they *should* be consigned to the region of punishment, it would prove so light an affair as to be rather a little misfortune than an awful calamity, he might certainly persuade them to an ample contribution. But that an enlightened minister of a protestant church *could* have the courage to declare or even insinuate the pernicious sentiment, awakens our utmost astonishment. We think there can be no doubt that a certain proportion of the money collected after the address, in which such a passage as this was seriously uttered, would be paid literally as the atonement for the past crimes, and as the price of an extended

license to repeat them with impunity. If the whole of the oration was powerfully persuasive, we cannot fail to attribute a large share of the success to that particular part, so soothing to apprehension, and so flattering to ignorance and corruption.

In returning towards Dublin, our author made a visit to the house of Mr. Grattan; and he might well feel himself flattered by the welcome and the polite attention, which he experienced there, and gratified by the mental luxuries which, we may believe, scarcely another house could have supplied. We should have been glad to receive some more particular information about this distinguished orator, than the assurance merely of his being a polite and hospitable man, an elegant scholar, and respectable in domestic relations. We should have been glad to hear something of his studies, his personal habits, his style of talking, or the manner in which he appears to meet advancing age. Yet we acknowledge it is a difficult matter for a transient visitor, who is received on terms of formal politeness, to acquire much knowledge on some of these particulars, and a matter of some delicacy to publish what he might acquire. A number of pages are occupied with passages from Mr. Grattan's speeches; some of which extracts, we believe, were supplied to Mr. Carr from memory, and therefore are probably given imperfectly. On the whole, however, these passages tend to confirm the general idea entertained of Mr. Grattan's eloquence, as distinguished by fire, sublimity, and an immense reach of thought. A following chapter is chiefly composed of similar extracts from Mr. Curran's speeches; in most of which the conceptions are expressed with more lucidness and precision than in the passages from Grattan. These specimens did not surprise, though they delighted us. We have long considered this distinguished counsellor as possessed of a higher genius than any one in his profession within the British empire. The most obvious difference between these two great orators is, that Curran is more versatile, rising often to sublimity, and often descending to pleasantry, and even drollery; whereas Grattan is always grave and austere. They both possess that order of intellectual powers, of which the limits cannot be assigned. No conception could be so brilliant or original, that we should

confidently pronounce that neither of these men could have uttered it. We regret to imagine how many admirable thoughts, which such men must have expressed in the lapse of many years, have been unrecorded, and are lost for ever. We think of these with the same feelings with which we have often read of the beautiful or sublime occasional phenomena of nature, in past times, or remote regions, which amazed and delighted the beholders, but which we were destined never to see.

ON MEMOIR-WRITING.

An Account of the Life and Writings of James Beattie, LL.D., late Professor of Moral Philosophy and Logic, in the Marischal College and University of Aberdeen, including many of his Original Letters. By Sir WILLIAM FORBES, of Pitaligo, Bart. 2 vols. 1807.

WHEN a man of humble condition and education, who has cultivated literature under the pressure of many disadvantages, and perhaps distresses, comes before the public with a work which has cost him great labour, costs the purchaser but a moderate price, and communicates very necessary, or at least very useful and seasonable information, he may justly claim for the faults of his book the very last degree of forbearance which criticism can exercise without surrendering its essential laws. But when a man of fortune, who has had a liberal education, who has been intimate with many of the most distinguished individuals, both in literature and rank, for forty years, who would indignantly disown any wish to raise money on the grave of his friend, who knows that an ample memoir of that friend has already been given to the public, and who adopts the easiest of all possible modes of making up volumes, publishes a splendid work, he will naturally disdain to be under any obligation to the clemency of critics. We shall, therefore, feel perfectly at liberty to express our honest opinion on these volumes; and laying out of the question all the excellences which the author

doubtless possesses, we shall consider him simply in the character which he has assumed in appearing before the public:

We cannot but earnestly wish that the present epidemical disease in literature, the custom of making very large books about individuals, may in due time find, like other diseases, some limit to its prevalence, and at length decline and disappear. What is to become of readers, if the exit of every man of some literary eminence, is thus to be followed by a long array of publications, beginning with duodecimos, extending into octavos, and expanded at last into a battalion of magnificent quartos? This is reviving to some purpose the Theban method of attacking in the form of a wedge; and we do hope the curiosity, diligence, and patience of readers will at last be completely put to the rout.

This swelling fungous kind of biography confounds all the right proportions in which the claims and the importance of individuals should be arranged, and exhibited to the attention of the public. When a private person, whose life was marked by few striking varieties, is thus brought forward in two volumes quarto, while many an individual of modern times, who influenced the fate of nations, has been confined to a sixth part of the compass, it reminds us too much of that political rule by which Old Saram, consisting of one house, is represented by two illustrious senators, while many very populous towns are not represented at all. If a professor of a college is to lie thus magnificently in state, what must be done for such a man as Mr. Pitt or Mr. Fox? And still more, what must be done after the exit of some persons who are at present acting their part in human affairs? The French *Encyclopedie* will be in point of bulk, but a horn-book in comparison of the stupendous hosts of folios, which must come forth after the departure of Bonaparte and Talleyrand; provided, that is to say, that sufficient materials, in the way of paper, ink, &c., can then be obtained wherewithal to furnish out this mighty blazon of monumental history. And by the way, the makers of paper will do well to take the hint from us, and have their warehouses ready for the event which will happen sooner or later in their favour, though to the confusion and dismay of the most courageous and indefatigable readers. As to reviewers, the

most industrious and incorruptible of all the servants of the public, they will then have the plea of absolute necessity for resorting to the practice of which they have sometimes been most unrighteously accused—that of reviewing books without inspecting them.

The method of constructing large biographical works out of an assemblage of letters, with here and there a page and paragraph between for the purpose of connexion and explanation, has plenty of plausible recommendations. There is an appearance of great modesty; the compiler makes no claims to the honours of authorship; all he is anxious for, is to display in the simplest manner, the merits, talents, and pursuits of his friend. That friend is thus made to present himself to us in his own person, and his familiar correspondence will disclose to us the internal qualities of the man incomparably better, as it is so often repeated to us, than any formal development of a biographer. The series of such letters, continued through half the length of life or more, will show the gradual progress and improvement of the mind. If some of them are trivial or common, in subject or style, even the smallest things said and written by eminent persons have their value; it is pleasing to observe how great minds sometimes unbend; and consoling to see in how many respects they are like ourselves. These are recommendations proper to be mentioned to the public; but there are others of which the biographer can silently take the advantage to himself, besides that extreme facility of performance which we have hinted already. One of these is impunity. There is little to be attacked in such a book, except what its author has *not* written; or if he is directly censured for introducing some of the things written by the person who is the subject of the book, the partiality of friendship is a plea always at hand, and a feeling always accounted amiable. Another is a fair opportunity for the biographer to introduce *himself* very often, and without the direct form of egotism; since the probability is, that not a few of the letters were written to him, and contain of course, many very handsome things. His modesty professes to hesitate about their insertion; but yet they must be inserted, because they show in so striking a light, the kind disposition of his friend.

Such handsome things, we have no doubt, were amply

deserved by Sir W. Forbes, and even those more than handsome things, which he informs us he has omitted in printing the letters. The indications of a sincere affection for Dr. Beattie, are very conspicuous; and we attribute it to a real partiality of friendship, that he has made this work much larger than we think can be of service to the instruction of the public, or the memory of his friend. The memory of that was unquestionably too dear to him to have permitted the insertion of one letter or line, which he did not sincerely believe would give the same impression of the writer, which Sir William himself was happy to cherish. It is, therefore, unfortunate, that the reader should feel, at the close of the book, that he would have been more pleased with both Dr. Beattie and his biographer, if it had come to a close much sooner.

The parts written by Sir W. Forbes, are in a style perspicuous, correct, and classical; generally relating however to particulars which require no great effort of thought. Many of these particulars are most unnecessarily introduced, and lead into details which are extremely tiresome, not excepting even the analysis of Dr. Beattie's writings. It had surely been enough to have stated in a few sentences, the objects of his several performances, and then, if the reader deemed those objects of importance, he would take an opportunity of consulting the books themselves. The notes contain a large assemblage of biographical and genealogical records. When a new acquaintance of Dr. Beattie is mentioned, it is deemed proper for us to be informed of his parentage, his connexions, his residence, his offices, his accomplishments. In several instances a letter of little interest is preceded by a long history of itself, for the purpose of making that letter intelligible, by detailing some transaction to which it relates; as in that part of the book referring to the union of two colleges in Aberdeen. Sir William is sufficiently a citizen of the world, we have no doubt, to wish his book may be read in each part of the kingdom; why was he not enough a citizen of the world, to be aware how small a portion of the kingdom can feel any concern in this piece of history? If he thought all these matters would magnify the importance of his principal subject, he is so far mistaken, that the reader is tempted to quarrel with that subject, on account of this crowd of

appendages. The reader feels in this case, just as Sir William would do, if some one of his friends of high rank, whom he would be very glad to receive in an easy quiet way, would never come to visit him for a day or two, without bringing also a large troop of footmen, postilions, cooks, nursery-maids, and other inhabitants of his house, kitchen, and stables. We *will* not suppose it was his formal purpose to make a very large book. Nor could it be his ambition to display writing talents, as the subjects would have been unfortunately selected for such a purpose; and indeed we do not accuse him of ostentation as an author. Perhaps it is no great vice if he exhibits a little of it as a man. But we have felt a degree of surprise that he should not seem to be aware of the impression which would be made on the minds of his readers, by his adding, at the end of almost every note relating to one or another distinguished personage of Dr. Beattie's acquaintance, "And I also had the honour of his friendship." This occurs so often, that we have felt that kind of irritation, which is excited when a man, that we wish to respect, is for the tenth or twentieth time doing or repeating a foolish thing in order to intimate his importance. We persuade ourselves that this feeling arises from our right perception of what would have preserved Sir William's dignity; perhaps, however, we deceive ourselves, and the feeling springs from envy of his high fortune, for we doubt if we were ever summoned to wait on a man of such extensive and illustrious connexions before.

Previously to the insertion of any of Dr. Beattie's letters, a succinct account is given of his life, from his birth, of humble, but respectable parents, till his twenty-fifth year, when he was appointed professor of moral philosophy and logic in Marischal College, after having passed through the offices of parish-clerk and schoolmaster in the neighbourhood of his native place, and assistant in a respectable school in Aberdeen. This rapid advancement, by means of merit alone, is in itself sufficient to evince both uncommon ability and industry. We are informed that the passion and the talent for poetry were very early awakened in his mind, and in one of his letters to a friend, in a later period of his life, he acknowledges that his "Minstrel" is substantially a description of what had been his own mental character in

his youth. A prematurity of faculties appears conspicuous through the whole course of his earlier life, and when he was fixed at Aberdeen, those faculties were extended to the utmost, in the society of a number of distinguished men, such as Campbell, Reid, Gerard, Gregory, and many others, with whom he familiarly associated, and from that time maintained an intimate friendship as long as the respective parties lived. An entertaining account is given of these literary friends forming themselves into a society for philosophical discussion, to which the common people gave the denomination of the Wise Club, in which the first ideas were started of some of those theories which were afterwards unfolded at large, in books that have obtained a high rank in the philosophic school. It is pleasing to observe, that the friendship among these scholars and philosophers was very cordial, and not withered by that envy and jealousy which the philosophic character has often enough failed to preclude, when rival talents have created a comparison and balance of reputation. Dr. Beattie retained his station at Aberdeen all the rest of his life, which was diversified only by his family connexions and cares, his publications, his friendships, and his occasional visits to London. A piece of information is now and then interposed by the biographer; but these circumstances are chiefly unfolded in Dr. Beattie's correspondence with Dr. Blacklock, Sir W. Forbes, Mr. Arbuthnot, Mrs. Montague, the Bishop of London, the Duchess of Gordon, and several other friends.

From the time of Beattie's establishment at Aberdeen, till within a very few years of the end of his life, a period of forty years, he prosecuted study and the business of authorship with indefatigable industry and ardour. And in passing along the series of letters, our admiration is repeatedly excited by the variety of attainments, the extent of accurate reading, and the quantity of composition, for which he was able to rescue time enough from his professional employments, wide correspondence, intercourse with society, and domestic sorrows. A more instructive example is not often displayed of what resolute application may accomplish, when supported by a very warm interest in the business in which it is exerted. But at the same time a warm passion for literature, especially when a man writes, as well as reads, is

apt to produce a species of extravagance, which, to people who are not in the same employment, appears excessively ludicrous. A cork-cutter, or a maker of nails, or pins, or pegs for shoes, who quietly betakes himself to his work every morning, and goes soberly through it as a matter of course, would be first surprised, and next diverted to laughter, to see the importance, and earnestness, and solemnity, put on by an author and a poet, while occupied about the making of a line, the adjusting of a syllable, the changing of an epithet, the measuring of dactyls, or the lengthening or shortening of a paragraph; and by the self-complacency, the air of high achievement, and the congratulations of scholars, when he has performed this great duty well. Even the detail of the graver and more philosophic labours of writing cannot be listened to long, when the writers are to give the account of them, without the loss of gravity; though it is true that the gravity which is lost in laughing, may be quickly resumed for censuring.

The letters of authors, from Pope's time, down to the present instance, betray them to this ridicule and this censure. There is no end of the amplifications and repetitions about my book, my poems, my ode, my epigram, my translations, my corrections, my new edition, my next production. I have taken great pains to amend the harshness of the tenth or fifteenth line; I have excluded one stanza, and inserted two; I flatter myself that the objection which has been made to it by the public will now be obviated; I have been particularly struck with a coincidence between a passage in my essay, and one in Mr. ———'s treatise; I can prove that mine was not borrowed; I have written twenty pages of a dissertation on the subject we were lately conversing upon; you know I do not think highly of my own talents; I am inclined to think this will be a decisive performance however; my last work is getting much into vogue as I am informed. I hear the critics are at work; I defy them; your approbation would sustain my self-complacency, if they were all to condemn me; Mr. ——— is very angry, but I think he will not attack; the work has produced a great sensation; I am told that Dr. E., and Bishop F., and Lord G. are delighted with it; I have just received a letter from Lady H., who pays me such compli-

ments as I will not repeat to you; she tells me that Mr. J. is wonderfully pleased and is very anxious to see me, &c., &c.

If authors may be allowed to expatiate on these matters, and in this manner, in their communications with their intimate literary friends, the letters ought, for the sake of the respectability of the writers, to be confined to those friends alone. Should there be any exception, it would be in the instance where some important principle of criticism is discussed in immediate connexion with any articles of the author's own performances, so that his remarks respecting his compositions, shall become instructive lessons on the art of composition in general. But this is rarely the case in those parts of the letters before us, which are occupied with a multitude of minutiae about the writer's own studies. We therefore think, that many of these letters convict Sir W. Forbes of utterly mistaking the proper method of recalling his departed friend, with dignity, into the public consideration.

The first publication of Dr. Beattie was a volume of juvenile poems, in a new edition of which he omitted several pieces which his biographer regrets to lose; especially a long Ode to Peace, which is inserted in the appendix to the present work. We think that Dr. Beattie showed more discernment in wishing to let it sink into oblivion, than Sir William in fishing it up again. The term Chaos occurs in the first stanza, and would have been a singularly appropriate title for the whole ode. It is not a *description* of chaos, but the very thing itself; a mass of ill-defined and enormous images; a confusion of crude elements, dashing, rumbling, howling, and fighting all in the dark.

The "Minstrel" is the production of a maturer age, and will always be read with delight by persons endowed with a taste for nature, with tenderness of feeling, and elevated imagination. The alleged deficiency of incident would hardly appear to be a fault, in any work so rich in refined sentiment and beautiful description.

An ample portion of the first volume is occupied with the project, the completion, the publication, and the success, of the "Essay on Truth." This is no place for the examination of the principles of that celebrated book, which, beyond all doubt, was

written with the worthiest intention, and was of considerable use at the time, in exposing some of the most obvious extravagances of the sceptical philosophy, which was carried to the very limit of sense by Mr. Hume, and pushed beyond it into the most ridiculous folly, by some of his weak admirers and wicked followers. The book will be an acceptable resting-place to those who are averse to the labour of abstract thinking, and an asylum to those who are terrified by the consequences sometimes seen to result from attempting to prosecute such thinking beyond the power and reach of the human faculties. But we cannot expect that philosophers will ever be satisfied with this doctrine of common sense. They will, we think justly, assert that there is no boundary which can fairly limit and close the investigation of truth on this side the region of metaphysics. The ultimate principles must be there, whether they can be found there or not; and thither the investigation will absolutely go, in spite of every contrivance to satisfy and determine it at any nearer point. How far it shall go into that world of abstraction, before its progress shall be stopped by humility or despair, will depend on the *strength* of a merely philosophic mind, and on the *discretion* of a pious one.

The author's expectations of the success of his essay were not sanguine, and therefore surprise heightened his satisfaction when it was received, if many of these letters do not exaggerate, with such delight, as if Christianity and true philosophy had been waiting, in the awful crisis of existence or extinction, for its appearance. It seems to have been welcomed like a convoy of provisions in a famishing garrison, by many high characters in church and state, whose exultation would really seem to betray the impression which their talents had not prevented Mr. Hume from making on their fears. The most flattering attentions thickened on Dr. Beattie within the circle of his personal acquaintance; and he received from England many letters abounding with expressions of admiration and offers of friendship, on the strength of which he was induced to make a visit to London. At this period of the history, he is presented to us in a different point of view from that of the scholar, poet, and philosopher. - We are fairly told, though with much care to qualify the homeliness of the confession, that it was need-

ful to Dr. Beattie to eat, which we have often had occasion to be sorry that philosophers, including reviewers, should be under the necessity of doing. The means of subsistence for himself and family were confined to the small stipend of his professorship, and the emolument that might accrue from his publications; of which he received a comfortable sample and assurance in the fifty guineas paid him for his "Essay on Truth," which had only cost him the labour of four years. His many generous and opulent friends in Scotland and England were aware of his circumstances, and sincerely regretted them. A comparatively small annual sum would have given a man of his moderate wants and habits, the feeling of independence; and a strong and concurrent sentiment of anxiety was awakened, in the minds of a greater number of noblemen and gentlemen than we can charge our memories with, to find out any means of obtaining for him this advantage. They lamented the duty, imposed on them by their high rank, of expending so many thousands on their splendid establishments and their hounds; while the illustrious defender of truth, and their dear friend, was in danger of something bordering on indigence. But notwithstanding these unavoidable necessities of their own condition, they would have been most happy to have made some effort in his favour, had not a fatal obstacle stood in the way. That obstacle was delicacy; it might hurt his feelings to insinuate to him the offer of any thing which they themselves regarded with such a generous scorn as money. With sincere sorrow, therefore, they were reduced to wait, and see what fortune might do for him. At last Mrs. Montague, much to her shame, violated this delicacy by informing him, that she would take upon herself to mend his condition, if a slight expectation which had begun to spring up from another quarter, should fail to be realized. This expectation was realized not long after, and his illustrious friends rejoiced in the double good fortune, that *their delicacy* was saved, and *his* purse was filled. Sir W. Forbes, one of those friends, and an opulent banker in Edinburgh, records this whole affair in the most honest simplicity of heart, just as we have done ourselves.

This brings us, as we conceive, to the middle of our song—

Now heavily comes on in clouds the day;
The great, th' important day, big with the fate—

But it was a much better fate than that of our old friend Cato. After many preparatory solemnities, Dr. Beattie was introduced to their Majesties; but a reverential awe forbids us to intrude our remarks on what passed in the royal sanctuary. We wait near the entrance till the bold adventurer returns, to display his acquisitions and his honours, a kind of *spolia opima*, similar to what Johnson, another great literary hero, had carried off sometime before, and often, as his historian tells, triumphantly exhibited to the wonder and envy of his numerous acquaintance. At Dr. Beattie's return, however, we find him so beset with a crowd and mob of zealous friends, that we are glad to make our escape from the bustle, and can only say, that at length he went back to Scotland with an annuity of £200. Highly appreciating the royal bounty, he ever afterwards testified the liveliest gratitude; and his attachment was naturally increased by the very flattering marks of friendship which he received from their Majesties on subsequent occasions.

During this visit he was introduced to the distinguished persons whose letters are here intermixed with his own. Our remarks on the whole collection must be brief and general. Together with a great deal that ought to have been omitted, as neither having any intrinsic value, nor supplying any additional illustration of the Doctor's qualities, they contain much good sense, easy writing, and frank disclosure of character. There is also a respectable share of true criticism; but we own there are not many passages that appear to us to reach the depths of either criticism or philosophy, which indeed are the same. The variety of the descriptions generally bear the marks of the poet and the man of taste. The references to subjects of domestic tenderness present him in so amiable a light that we deeply sympathize with the melancholy which accompanied every recollection of the state of his family; and it must have been inevitable to a man like him, to have that recollection almost continually in his mind. The direct allusions, however, are not often repeated, and with much propriety Sir William has no doubt omitted many paragraphs relating to the subject.

Dr. Beattie's style is singularly free and perspicuous, and

adapted in the highest degree to the purpose of familiar lecturing to his pupils; but for an author we should deem it something less than elegant, and something less than nervous. In early life he took great pains to imitate Addison, whose style he always recommended and admired. But Addison's style is not sufficiently close and firm for the use of a philosopher, and as to the exquisite shades of his colours, they can perhaps never be successfully imitated. We were rather surprised to find the enthusiastic admirer of Addison preferring the old Scotch version of the Psalms to every other; and the opinion of so respectable a judge put our national partialities in some degree of fear. But we soon recovered our complacency in our own venerable Sternhold and Hopkins, who, in point of harmony and elegance, richness and majesty, and all the other high attributes of poetry, have surely beaten their northern rivals.

In many parts of the letters, we are constrained to perceive a degree of egotism inconsistent with the dignity of a philosopher or a man. The writer seems unwilling to lose any opportunity of recounting the attentions, the compliments, the testimonies of admiration, which he has received from individuals or the public. The complacency with which he expatiates on himself and his performances, is but imperfectly disguised by the occasional and too frequent professions of holding himself and those performances cheap. This is a very usual but unsuccessful expedient, with those who have reflection enough to be sensible that they have rather too much ostentation, but not resolution enough to restrain themselves from indulging in it. It will unluckily happen sometimes, that these professions of self-disesteem will be brought into direct contrast with certain things that betray a very different feeling. There is an instance of this in the second volume (p. 173), where the expression, "you have paid too much attention to my foolish remarks," is printed in the same page with this other expression, "poor Mr. Locke."

Another conspicuous feature of this correspondence is the gross flattery interchanged between Dr. Beattie and his friends. The reader is sometimes tempted to suspect, that he has been called to be present at a farce where the principal persons are flattering for a wager. During the perusal

we have been obliged again and again to endeavour to drive out of our imagination the idea of a meeting of friends in China, where the first mandarin bows to the floor, and then the second mandarin bows to the floor, and then the first mandarin bows again to the floor, and thus they go on till friendship is satisfied or patience tired. In his letters to one individual, a duchess, the Doctor felt it his duty to take notice of her person as well as abilities and virtues. But we should conclude that all the other gentlemen of her acquaintance must have been very sparing of compliments to her beauty, if she could be gratified by such as those of the professor.

If it is *not* gross flattery that abounds in these letters, we have the more cause to be sorry for having come into the world some years later than Dr. Beattie and Sir W. Forbes. There have been better times than the present, if during the main part of this correspondence, every gentleman was an accomplished scholar, every person of opulence and power was humble and charitable, and every prelate an apostle. Astræa must have left the earth much later than report has commonly given out.

The letters of the Doctor's friends constitute the smaller, yet a considerable proportion of the series. Those of Mrs. Montague are greatly superior to the rest, and excel in some respects those of Dr. Beattie himself. The general praise of good language is due to the whole collection. It may appear a caprice of our taste to dislike the frequent recurrence of the words *credit* and *creditable*. "Highly creditable to his understanding and his heart," "does equal credit to his talents and his character," &c., &c., are phrases returning so often, that they become disagreeable intruders on the eye and the ear. The sameness of phrase is however strikingly relieved by novelty of application, in a letter of condolence from a learned prelate to Dr. Beattie, after the death of his second son. (Vol. II., p. 309.) The mourning father is told that, "The faith, the piety, the fortitude, displayed by so young a man, on so awful an occasion, do infinite *credit* to him." As if dying were a matter of exhibition, to be performed handsomely to please the spectators.

Among the sensible and entertaining pieces of criticism to be found in the Doctor's letters, we might refer to his

observations on the novel of *Clarissa*, Ossian's Poems, the *Nouvelle Eloïse*, *Metastasio*, *Tasso*, *Cæsar's Commentaries*, the diction of the *Orientalists*, and the *Henriade*. In connexion with the subjects of criticism, are the curious remarks on the character of *Petrarch*, and the truly fantastic picture of *Lord Monboddo*. A selection of about one-third of the materials composing these volumes, would make a very interesting and instructive book.

Though we have complained of the mass of extraneous matter, yet some of the facts incidentally related, are such as ought not to have been lost. The account of the excellent lady, whose husband, with all his property, perished at sea, and who was niece to the once celebrated *Mrs. Catharine Cockburn*, would be very interesting, were we not convinced from the internal evidence, that it is most incorrectly stated. According to this account she lived till that late period when *Mrs. Montague* settled on her an annuity for the short remainder of her life, in great penury; insomuch that it was a matter of wonder how she contrived to preserve a tolerable appearance in respect of clothing. Now this must be an utter mistake or misrepresentation, for we are told that she was well known to many persons of eminent rank, and in particular was highly esteemed by the *Duchess of Gordon*, the possessor, as we learn from *Dr. Beattie*, of every beneficent virtue, as well as every charm under heaven. The transport of surprise and gratitude displayed by the aged sufferer, on being informed what *Mrs. Montague* had done, and which this narrative of *Dr. Beattie* and *Sir W. Forbes* would really leave us to attribute to her having never experienced much bounty before, was owing unquestionably to a very different cause. It was her benevolent joy that a part of the ample supplies which she had received from her former munificent patrons and patronesses, and especially the *Duchess*, might now be applied to the support of other deserving persons in distress. While remarking on the error of the statement, it strikes us as equally singular and meritorious, that we, who were never honoured with a smile or nod from a peer or peeress—that we, in our obscure garrets, labouring at our occupation during the day by the few glimpses of light that can steal through windows almost stopped up with old hats and bits of board to keep out the

rain, and during the night by the lustre of farthing candles—should be more solicitous about the reputation of people of high rank, than Sir W. Forbes, the intimate friend of so many of them, appears in this instance to have been. We hope that this our virtue, in default of other recompense, will be its own reward; and we trust it will be a pledge, that, whatever culpable dispositions may belong to reviewers, they feel no inclination to speak evil of dignities.

We could have wished to entertain an unmingled respect for the moral habits and religious views of Dr. Beattie; and it is an ungracious thing to detect any signs of a moral latitude inconsistent with the religion which he wished to defend. One of these signs is his passion for the theatre. Who would ever dream, on reading the following passage, that it could have been written by a zealous friend of the religion of Christ?

“I rejoice to hear that Mr. Garrick is so well as to be able to appear in tragedy. It is in vain to indulge one's self in un-availing complaints, otherwise I could rail by the hour at Dame Fortune, for placing me beyond the reach of that arch-magician, as Horace would have called him. I well remember, and I think I can never forget, how he once affected me in *Macbeth*, and made me almost throw myself over the front seat of the two-shilling gallery. I wish I had another opportunity of risking my neck and nerves in the same cause. To fall by the hands of Garrick and Shakspeare would ennoble my memory to all generations. To be serious, if all actors were like this one, I do not think it would be possible for a person of sensibility to outlive the representation of *Hamlet*, *Lear*, or *Macbeth*; which, by the bye, seems to suggest a reason for that mixture of comedy and tragedy of which our great poet was so fond, and which the Frenchified critics think such an intolerable outrage both against nature and decency. Against nature, it is no outrage at all; the inferior officers of a court know very little of what passes among kings and statesmen; and may be very merry when their superiors are very sad; and if so, the Porter's Soliloquy in *Macbeth* may be a very just imitation of nature. And I can never accuse of indecency the man, who, by the introduction of a little unexpected merriment, saves me from a disordered head or a broken heart. If Shakspeare knew his own powers, he must have seen the necessity of tempering his tragic rage by a mixture of comic ridicule; otherwise there was some danger of his running into greater excesses than deer-stealing,

by sporting with the lives of all the people of taste in these realms. Other playwrights must conduct their approaches to the human heart with the utmost circumspection, a single false step may make them lose a great deal of ground ; but Shakspeare made his way to it at once, and could make his audience burst their sides this moment, and break their hearts the next. I have often seen Hamlet performed by the underlings of the theatre, but none of these seemed to understand what they were about. Hamlet's character, though perfectly natural, is so very uncommon, that few, even of our critics, can enter into it. Sorrow, indignation, revenge, and consciousness of his own irresolution, tear his heart ; the peculiarity of his circumstances often obliges him to counterfeit madness, and the storm of passions within him often drives him to the verge of real madness. Thus produces a situation so interesting, and a conduct so complicated, as none but Shakspeare could have had the courage to describe, and none but Garrick will ever be able to exhibit. Excuse this rambling ; I know you like the subject ; and for my part I like it so much, that when I once get in, I am not willing to find my way out of it."—Vol. I. pp. 218—220

We may also be allowed to ask, how it consisted with that full approbation which he uniformly avowed of the Established church of England, to spend the Sabbath in a convivial party with Sir J. Reynolds, Barotti, and other persons, some of whom would most likely have laughed at him, had he hinted any recollection of the duty of public worship ? This was not a singular offence with him.

Religious opinions, in the strict sense, are scarcely disclosed in any part of the work, except occasionally by implication, as in the following sentence : "The virtue of even the best man must, in order to appear meritorious at the great tribunal, have something added to it which man cannot bestow." We were sincerely grieved to meet with so grand a mistake of the nature of Christianity. On the whole, we fear Dr. Beattie conformed in his moral principles too much to the fashion of reputable men of the world, and in his religious ones too much to the fashion of scholars and philosophers. This fear was in no degree obviated, by our finding the first of his precepts to a young minister of the gospel to be exactly this, "Read the classics day and night." We are forcibly reminded, by contrast, of the injunction given to Timothy by the prince of the apostles.

We question, too, whether the Doctor, in another instance,

acquitted himself very uprightly as a "soul-doctor," (for thus he terms himself); we refer to his prescription for a noble duchess,* whose name occurs very often within these pages. There was a period, we find, when that lady was disposed to solitude and reflection; one of those awful periods at which the destiny of an individual seems oscillating in suspense, and a small influence of advice, or circumstance, has the power to decide it. How Dr. Beattie used this intrusted moment, may be seen from the following admonitions:—

"Seasons of recollection may be useful; but when one begins to find pleasure in sighing over Young's 'Night Thoughts' in a corner, it is time to shut the book, and return to the company. . . . Such things may help to soften a rugged mind; and I believe I might have been the better for them. But your Grace's heart is already 'too feelingly alive to each fine impulse,' and, therefore, to you I would recommend gay thoughts, cheerful books, and sprightly company."—Vol. II. pp. 28, 29.

We are doubtful which most to admire, the rigid friendship of the adviser, or the notorious docility of the pupil, the degree in which they both exemplify the predominance of a devotional spirit, appears to be nearly equal.

Here our remarks must be concluded. The closing part of Dr. Beattie's life is as affecting as any tragedy we ever read, and will appeal irresistibly to the sympathy of every reader who can reflect or feel. His health had been ruined by intense study, and the hopeless grief arising from the circumstance already mentioned. Under the loss of his nearest relative by what was far worse than her death, his eldest son, an admirable youth, became the object of unbounded affection. At the age of twenty-two he died. A few years after, his remaining son, not equally interesting with the other, but yet an excellent young man, died also. The afflicted parent manifested a resignation to the divine will which cannot be surpassed. But nature sunk by degrees into a state, from which his friends could not but congratulate his deliverance by death.

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* Anne, Duchess of Gordon, daughter of Sir W. Maxwell, of Dalkeith, Bart.

THOUGHTS ON AFFECTATION.

Addressed chiefly to Young People. 8vo. 1807.

THE anonymous writer of this book is a lady, who in a simple and dignified manner assigns herself to the elderly class. With *us* she loses nothing by this confession; for the gallantry of reviewers is different from that of almost all other men. *We* like an aged woman who entertains us with sense and knowledge, ten times better than a young one who would divert us with follies; and our prime favourites, the Muses themselves, had lost all the light attractions of juvenility, long enough, we presume, before we had the honour to be introduced to their acquaintance.

If the present writer had not given us the information, we should nevertheless have been quite certain she is not young. Her very extensive knowledge of characters and manners, would have soon discovered to us a person long accustomed to observe the world with that impartial, sober attention, in which the judgment is no longer the dupe of fancy and giddy passions. Her acquaintance with mankind has extended to various classes, and especially, as it appears, to a great number of the wealthy and fashionable; and she has exemplified the several kinds of affectation by many instances from real life, so various and so appropriately introduced, that they form no small part of the value of the book. As a matter of course, she avoids mentioning the names of any of the persons whose conduct supplied these anecdotes; but notwithstanding this observance of the rules of benevolence and decorum, we have sometimes been apprehensive that, since it is likely some of the persons whose follies she has recorded will read her work, she may excite a resentment which, in some possible instances, may occasion her a little exercise of her philosophy. We have repeatedly imagined some high-spirited dame or gentleman throwing down the book with indignation, and exclaiming, "This impudent writer means *me*; I know who she is now. I said something like this at such a time, and I remember

this Mrs. — was there; 'pon my honour I will be revenged, that I *will*. Such scandalous impertinence! And so this civil-speaking, demure-faced hypocrite makes her visits to write down everybody's faults and what everybody says, and then puts it in a moralizing, canting book, to make herself look wiser than her neighbours." If she is secure of impunity, we have certainly reason to be pleased that she has taxed, for contributions to her book, so many individuals, families, and companies, who little imagined that they were uttering speeches that were to be printed for the purpose of enforcing moral and prudential instructions.

Our author uses the term Affectation, not in the confined sense in which it frequently occurs, as descriptive of merely a particular fault in manners; but in its widest signification, as applicable to all assumed false appearances, in the whole social conduct of mankind. And her extensive and vigilant observation has detected a greater variety of modes of affectation, than we had apprehended to be in existence. These she has arranged in two parallel lists of opposites; as, Courage—Cowardice: Modesty and Innocence—Boldness and Impudence, &c. &c., making her remarks on them in a series of pairs, in each of which two opposites are placed immediately together. A somewhat too systematical adherence to this plan has led her into an impropriety, as she herself is partly sensible, at the section on the affectation of the virtue of Truth. Taking this term in the sense of veracity, she acknowledges there is no opposite affectation to be found, as no one ever laboured or wished to sustain the character of a liar. Taken in the sense of sincerity or plain speaking (and, by the way, her remarks have very much confused this sense with the former), it is surely opposed to something quite different from bluntness, which she has assigned as its opposite; since bluntness is only this very same plain-speaking, carried to such an excess as to become rudeness.

A benevolent intention appears to pervade the book, though it is throughout a satire on society and on human nature. Her censures are often in the plainest style of moral simplicity and seriousness, while her descriptions are ludicrous. And we can really believe that she has been more grieved than diverted, by the results of that process of

detection to which she has subjected all the companies in which she has mingled. But we are sorry to be compelled to entertain so good an opinion of her dispositions. We have laboured in vain to persuade ourselves that she is a stranger to all the virtues allied to candour and generosity. And why labour for so odd a purpose? Because, in reading through her book, we have been continually reminded of one sentence in the earlier part of it: "Generosity is always unsuspicious, and fancies more virtue than really exists; nay, is sometimes too credulous, but if this be an error it is a most pleasing one," (p. 40). We have said to ourselves at the end of each section: 'Now, if we were certain that she has none of this generosity, we might console ourselves by the persuasion that the case is not quite so bad as she represents. But, on the contrary, we are afraid she is generous; she has therefore the kindly credulity which judges far too favourably of mankind; and if *she*, who views them in a light so much more favourable than that of absolute truth, sees, notwithstanding, that at least half their intercourse consists in mutual hypocrisy, what would be pronounced of them by a person, who with equal shrewdness should not have generosity enough to beguile the judgment into such an error?'

While we wish our author may have the good fortune to preserve *her* generosity undiminished, we may have some difficulty to forgive her for having lessened *ours*. After being made the witnesses of her course of experiments, in which so many things have been directed of their first appearances, we are afraid we shall not for some time be able to enter into any society without a suspicion too watchful for the indulgence of the friendly feelings. We shall be repeating to ourselves, "They are not what they seem;" and instead of objects of kindness, shall be tempted to regard them as mere subjects to try and sharpen our sagacity upon. We may be in danger of feeling like a man who is so intent on detecting a number of persons appearing in masks, that he is almost pleased with the most lamentable accident that makes one of these masks fall off. Even in our capacity of reviewers, the impression of her book may affect us, in a manner unfortunate for the feelings of men, whose highest gratification is well known to consist in the

exercise of candour, and the conferring of praise. She can easily believe that we shall deeply regret to feel that we have in any degree lost that amiable simplicity and credulity with which we have been accustomed to read dedications and panegyrics; expressions of the humble opinion entertained by authors concerning their books; accounts of their reluctance and hesitation to publish till the importunity of friends prevailed; avowals of having neither expectation nor desire of fame; and disinterested professions, that it will be a sufficient reward if but one person shall be benefited by the performance.

Previously to an actual survey of mankind, it might be supposed that the qualities of which men assume a false semblance to recommend themselves, should be almost all good ones. But the volume before us illustrates the strange fact, that almost every disagreeable and detestable distinction of character is sometimes affected, as well as its opposite. At the same time, it is proper to observe that in the case of some of these disagreeable and odious things, the affectation necessarily is the reality; as, for instance, arrogance, impudence, roughness and harshness, intemperance, and impiety. With regard to this last especially, we do not see how there can be any room to apply the term affectation, excepting merely to an insincere disavowal of religious *belief*; for as to all the hateful expressions of profaneness, they are *bonâ fide* absolute impiety, without any qualification. Indeed, it is but justice to our excellent author to say that in the section on Impiety she does chiefly confine the term affectation to this insincere disavowal of belief; but in the section on Impatience she has applied the term to swearing, and the most horrid imprecations. It is true indeed that this imprecation and swearing may be mentioned as the *affectation of impatience*; but this leaves the guilt under but an equivocal, and therefore faint condemnation; since, unless a further distinction is strongly marked, the term affectation, which should be confined strictly to the feigned impatience, may seem as if it were a sufficient term of censure for the impiety also, and implied that the chief guilt of the impiety, in this instance, were merely in its being the language of affectation. It should be distinctly stated that the feigned

impatience is one bad thing, or at least foolish thing, and that the impiety employed to support this affectation is another, and incomparably worse. We were not pleased with the remark in this section, that the "impious habit taints manner with an offensive vulgarity." The consideration of mere *manners* does not deserve to be mentioned or recollected in connexion with the diabolical language which she has just recited as what she had herself heard. But we would not for a moment be understood to insinuate that our author shows any intentional indulgence to the vile custom, on the contrary, she evidently feels the most emphatical abhorrence of it. We only remark in this instance a want of clear distinction in her condemnation of it — She mentions a curious circumstance in the section on the affected contempt of religion —

"That *believing* and *trembling* are often mixed with apparent contempt of duty I know to be a fact from the very respectable authority of an elderly person who was for years a constant attendant on six o'clock morning prayers and who has assured me that at that vulgar hour it was by no means uncommon to meet fashionable young men, whose usual conversation was of the lightest sort and who in gay company would have scoffed at going to church, where they would have thought it a disgrace to be seen at a late hour' P 105

There is a great difference between that prudent and necessary self-government by which a man avoids the practical exhibition of the bad or foolish dispositions which he feels, and regrets to feel, and that simulation of the direct contrary qualities which may justly be termed affectation. That which our author condemns as affectation, is generally a very discriminative and strongly delineated picture of what truly deserves the name. In a very few instances, however, we have thought that what she censures may be no more than such a cautious repression of feelings as a wise man would often wish to exert. In many cases in life, both virtue and common sense forbid to *let all out*. And we have now and then wished that our respectable author, when describing what was overdone in the way of feigning a good quality, had defined what would be just enough done in the way of concealing a bad one. At the same time, it is to be observed that this care to avoid *displaying* a bad quality

should be ever accompanied with an effort and earnest wish for the destruction of its existence.

In several instances our author makes assertions, at which, considering her discernment in human character, we could not help being surprised. "Gratitude," she says, (pp. 42, 43) "seems so natural, as for it to be impossible ever to affect that which must, without any effort, belong to every being that exists. It is in the most exalted manner constantly directed towards the Giver of all good, in whom we live, move, and have our being. Gratitude to God certainly admits not of affectation; we all must, we all do feel it." Surely sentences like these were written, either under the immediate impression of some pleasing circumstance which deluded the author's judgment into an extravagant charity, or in a moment of great inattention. For it would seem impossible she should not be aware of the notorious and melancholy fact that vast numbers of persons, even of respectable education, and in what is called a Christian country, do not appear to feel one emotion of pious gratitude throughout the whole year. They may now and then utter the expression "Thank God," or some similar phrase, which, in their careless way of using it is no better than absolute profaneness, while their general language abounds with direct insults to the Almighty. They never, as far as can be observed, spend one moment in anything like devotional employment; and, instead of that conscientious obedience which would be the evidence of gratitude to the Supreme Benefactor, the tenor of their conduct but evinces alternate forgetfulness and contempt of his commands.

We could not help noticing one little circumstance of inconsistency in her manner of mentioning the subject of cards, in two or three different parts of the book. Playing at cards "is at best, even when it injures neither fortune nor temper (and how seldom does that happen!) a total waste of time, which might indisputably be better employed," (p. 218). "I see no merit in actually not knowing how to play at cards, and no want of good sense in occasionally making up the party of those persons to whom it is an amusement," (p. 178). "In a dictatorial style to decry, or to announce contempt for, what is the entertainment of so many people, is the sign of a weak understanding, of

affected, and not of true prudence," (p. 214). If these passages had fallen under her eye at once, she would have felt the necessity of some alteration. And would it not have been obvious to her, *what* alteration? All moral speculation must be a dream, if that which is pronounced to be at best a "total waste of time," should not therefore be absolutely and unconditionally condemned. Is our estimate of time come at last to this, that it is a thing which may be totally wasted without guilt? It is true that a person may declare against cards in an *affected manner*; but the expressions we have quoted apparently go the length of attributing affectation not only to a particular *manner*, but also to the thing itself. A man may "decry and announce contempt" from a motive less dignified than a purely moral one; but it is not easy to conceive anything more deserving of contempt than the grave employment for hours together of a number of rational beings in what she describes as a "laborious amusement, which demands more application of the mind than is required for the attainment of many a more desirable art," and which after all is at best but a total waste of time. If there be any possible case in which we can be certain of not misplacing our contempt of the employment, and our censure of the persons, it must be this.

In p. 114 she alludes to "the amusements suited to the age" of young persons, in a way to include "dancing at the ball." We think it would have well become the good sense and benevolent intention so conspicuous in this volume, to have pronounced that what experience proves to be a pernicious folly, is suited to *no* age. We must also protest against the morality of such a passage as the following: "I should feel highly gratified could I suppose it possible that I shall persuade any one old gentleman" (she is speaking of old beaux that affect youth) "instead of talking nonsense to girls who laugh at him, to join their mothers and aunts at the whist-table." If these two occupations are the only alternative, why may not the poor old wretch choose which he likes best, alleging that the prettier fools, even though they do laugh at him, are the more pleasant set of the two? But it is wrong for a writer who reveres what this writer professes to revere, to seem to allow that either of these employments can be the proper one for a miserable

creature in danger of that last and deepest curse,—to close a life of folly by a death without repentance. As she makes repeated references in a serious and explicit manner to those future prospects, a right contemplation of which would dictate a plan of life widely different from what is generally in vogue in polished society, she ought not to have shown the least tolerance to anything essentially incompatible with the principles of such a plan. There is no pardoning one sentence that sanctions such things as balls for young people and whist for old ones, in a book which sometimes alludes to the Supreme Judge, to the improvement of time, to the period of retribution, and to eternity. It cannot be too often repeated that Christianity will be an absolute monarch or nothing, that it has pronounced an irreversible execration on those vain habits of which the things just specified are a part and an evidence, and that a man positively must reject *them* or reject *it*. The general rectitude of our author's judgment has been beguiled by her intercourse with the world, out of an accurate perception of the aspect which Christianity bears on some of the world's habits. And, therefore, a few of her strictures are content to propose a modification of what they should have condemned to destruction.

We will select a few specimens of the illustrations, which give a spirited and entertaining, as well as instructive character to this volume:—

"It is too often a fact that the obscure petitioner will be harshly refused, while the genteel charity is cheerfully engaged in; of this a strong instance occurs to me which I cannot help relating. I one day applied to a rich and elegant lady for some relief for a poor family whom I knew to be in the greatest distress, owing to the father's extreme illness preventing him from the daily labour by which he maintained a lying-in wife and several children, one of whom had lately had the misfortune of breaking a leg. I was not a little hurt to be answered with the greatest coldness, 'that it was impossible to relieve everybody that was in want; and that she had already given all she chose to give in charity to Lady —, in order to help her poor coachman to Bath to visit his friends, and perhaps try the efficacy of the waters for his stomach.' 'But,' said I, 'these good people are your neighbours, the father has often worked in your grounds, they are worthy and in great distress.' 'And

what of that?' replied my acquaintance, 'I can't maintain all the people I hear of; besides, you know, there is such a thing as the parish—let them apply to that.' I presently took my leave, when on going out of the house I was stopped by a footman (whom I had observed to linger in the room busy in repairing the fire, for a considerable time during our conversation), who with tears in his eyes said to me, slipping a couple of shillings into my hand, 'I have known honest Tom for years; I wish this were more; but such as it is he is heartily welcome.' I went away delighted; and, as may easily be imagined, not without thinking of the poor widow and her mite."—P. 14.

It is amusing to imagine the airs and attitudes in which the lady alluded to will display her mildness and her charms, if she should happen to read this story. In that case, we hope this footman will be far enough out of her way. He had better, we will assure him, be caught in any hail-storm that will happen this winter, than be within reach of my lady's bell when she reads this paragraph. Our worthy author, too, had better meet Hecate and all her witches, than come in the way of this personage about the same good time. It was from her having given a great number of illustrations in this manner, from real facts and persons, that we were induced to express our concern that she may have philosophy enough to brave the spite which her temerity may have provoked.

It is not for *us* to say whether she is as correct as she is humorous, and what is sometimes called wicked, in the following passages on the affectation of cowardice:—

"Fear produces so much compassion, that there is no occasion on which it may not be pretty for a lady to be alarmed. She may scream if the carriage goes a little awry; or if she should unfortunately be forced to enter a ferry-boat; or perhaps the nasty wasp may sting her. And then to shriek, and put herself in elegant attitudes, as she flies round the room to avoid it, is delicate, and interests the attention of the gentleman, who endeavours to destroy this disturber of the lady's peace. If in a crowd the lady is to be afraid she shall be killed; though with the assistance of the gentleman who protects her, and pities her timidity, she gets as safely through the push as any other person. During a walk, she may be in agonies for fear of a mad dog, or an over-driven ox: indeed horses, cows, feeding quietly in the field, a shabby looking man at a distance, or any thing, will do for the display of the feminine attraction of cowardice. I have known

a poor innocent mouse, or even a frog, throw a whole party into terrible confusion. But then, it must be observed, that these terrors seldom show themselves if the ladies are unaccompanied by some man, in whose eyes they wish to appear graceful: and a woman walking with only her servant, would hardly fall into hysterics at the sight of a toad; though in company the same hideous spectacle might have caused the most dreadful agitation of spirits."—P. 28.

Of the affectation of being younger than a person really is, she gives a pitiable instance:—

"There cannot be a stronger proof of the very prevalent fondness for youth, which belongs to every situation and time of life, than in the behaviour of a woman who lived on charity. On petitioning for some additional relief from her parish, she was told by the person who was drawing up her case, that her age must be mentioned; but seeming rather averse to disclose the important secret, and saying she never had known exactly what it was, 'Well,' said the friend, who meant to assist her, 'we must make it all as bad as we can, consistently with truth; so I may certainly very safely say fifty.' 'No, no, ma'am,' interrupted the poor creature, with the greatest earnestness, 'no, not so bad as fifty; I have been a-thinking, and am sure I ben't more than forty-nine, and not quite half neither.' This wretched woman was diseased, deformed, and in the most abject poverty; and yet as much affected youth as the fine lady, who puts on rouge, and multiplies ornaments, to conceal years that will not be concealed."—P. 289.

We are inclined to attribute affectation to an instance, which the author cites as an example of dignity of conduct; and which would have been eminently such, if not affected.

"The old general officer was no coward, of whom it was well known, that when excuses were offered to him by the friend of a young man who had used very improper language at a public place the night before, he received the apology by saying, 'I am very deaf, sir, and did not hear half the poor young gentleman said.' 'But he is very truly ashamed; for he says he was foolish enough to give you his address, and ask for a meeting this morning.' 'He might,' returned the general, 'but pray don't let him distress himself; I did not look at it, and the crowd being very great, I dropped the card; so that I don't even know his name.'"—P. 25.

The style of this volume indicates a hand not habituated

to the business, or at least not to the critical rules, of composition. It is of an unformed, negligent, and at times very incorrect cast; and yet has occasionally that kind of point and elegance, which we have observed to occur sometimes even in the ordinary conversation of all intelligent women.

By one moment's attention, the author will perceive that she has put a mistaken construction on the term "vanity," as used in the apothegm of Ecclesiastes, cited in the beginning of her introduction.

After what we have said, we need not add, that we feel very sincere respect for this anonymous lady, whoever she may be, and deem her book, with one or two little exceptions, a valuable miscellany of instructions, especially for young persons in genteel life, for whom it is particularly designed.

THE FUTURE OF ENGLAND AND AMERICA.

The Stranger in America.—Containing Observations made during a long Residence in that Country, on the Genius, Manners, and Customs of the People of the United States; with Biographical Particulars of Public Characters, Hints and Facts relative to the Arts, Sciences, Commerce, Agriculture, Manufactures, Emigration, and the Slave Trade. By CHARLES WILLIAM JANSON, Esq., late of the State of Rhode Island, Counsellor at Law. 4to. 1807.

THE appellation of mother-country has been familiarly applied to England in relation to America, and there was a time when the title was very flattering to her vanity, and perhaps very gratifying to her parental affections. She fancied herself grown young again in the unfolding charms, the vigorous health, the rising stature, and the active spirit of her hopeful descendant, whose name she was continually repeating, whose lineaments of resemblance to herself she fondly traced, and whose honour she watchfully and even fiercely defended, against every suspicious or unfriendly demonstration. She looked round with no little exultation

mixed perhaps with no little contempt, on some of her neighbours, who could not show so fair and virtuous an offspring.

For some time all went on very well. The matron, feeling no rivalry with the blooming minor, was liberal in her indulgences and moderate in her claims; while the daughter, conscious of the necessity of protection, revering a personage that every one else was seen to revere, and affected with the kindness of the parental caresses, was happy in the exercise of an almost uniform obedience. The time, however, inevitably arrived when she could no longer be treated as a child, and to the elder lady the wisdom was not given, to know how to behave to her as a person come to maturity. The matron began to feel a certain indefinable jealousy, which gradually displayed itself in a change of deportment from easy cordiality to manners of alternate formality and petulance, followed by a more rigid exaction of the homage and the services which she had been accustomed to receive in the earlier years of her young relative. The daughter expressed her regret at this change, mingled with a degree of pride which ventured to intimate that the age for silent obedience and unconditional submission was past, and presumed to mention counter-claims, in the way of compromise. The senior dame, incensed to hear of conditions and stipulations from what had been so lately a helpless dependent brat, made short work, and reduced the question to the alternative of absolute submission, or the utmost vengeance of her power. The damsel was instantly fired with the spirit of an Amazon, sought the acquaintance, and accepted the aid, of her mother's most inveterate rival, and finally declared she could establish herself in the world separate and free. This determination she carried into effect, with a courage and address which triumphed over the greatest difficulties; and she has ever since maintained the behaviour of an equal, tolerably civil when she has experienced civility, and indifferent or contemptuous, when the old lady could not, in her manners, repress her spleen at recollecting, how lately she possessed an absolute authority over this arrogant virgin.

Since that period, the maternal title has sounded but

ungraciously in the ears of the personage, who has lost both the authority and the affection which render it flattering. In plain terms, the English nation, while contemplating the American States, is rather mortified than pleased, in recollecting whence they have derived their origin, and would perhaps regard them with somewhat more complacency, if they had been a people sprung from some distant and forgotten stock. It had been less grating to our pride, to have acknowledged an independence inherited from a horde of Esquimaux or Tartars, than an independence assumed in requital of our patronage, and in defiance of our power. We hear of their advancing population, agriculture, and commerce, not without some occasional feelings like those of a man who observes the flourishing condition and ample produce of an estate which he lately called his own, but which an expensive litigation, and an adjustment of what he may deem very questionable equity, has transferred to another claimant. This feeling will be occasionally awakened, till the present generation shall be passed away, and succeeded by a race to whom the loss of America will be, not a matter of irksome remembrance, but merely a fact of history, like the loss of our ancient possessions in France.

Perhaps at length, when America shall have grown into a magnificent association of empires, the pride of having been their origin will be kindled afresh, and England, become, as she may eventually become, one of the inferior states of Europe, will boast that it is in *America* that she appears in her glory, where her language, her literature, and the spirit of her polity and laws, are extended from the shores of the Atlantic to those of the Pacific Ocean, and from Lake Superior to the Straits of Magellan.

We have said that England may eventually become one of the inferior states of the 1d World. Indeed this seems inevitable (supposing no unforeseen causes to intervene), if we have any right to believe that the other countries may at length attain the same proportionate population, and an equal eminence in knowledge and civilization. For whenever the nations shall become nearly equal in these grand attainments, the precedence in importance and influence will naturally fall to those of the number, that, possessing

the widest extent of compact territory, have the greatest number of people at command. If, therefore, in the progress of time, the greater and more southern part of the Russian empire, if Germany, consolidated, as it may very possibly be, into one mighty state, and if France, though reduced to narrower limits than those to which her arms have extended her authority, should rise to the same intellectual and moral level as England, each of them will then, according to the most obvious principles of proportion, hold an immense superiority over her, in the consideration, and in the power of influencing the condition, of the world: and we cannot see any insurmountable obstacles to the possibility of their ultimate attainment of this rival improvement of the mind. As to the importance which England derives at present from her naval power, nothing can be more factitious and precarious. This cumbrous engine, which is gradually exhausting the national vigour which actuates it, will become useless, as the larger states continue to advance in that knowledge which organizes numbers and physical resources into national power. If she maintain amity with the greater nations, she will not need this naval force, and if hostility, she will lose it. For the skill derived from progressive arts and repeated trial, combined with ampler resources supplied by nature and numbers, will enable the superior states ultimately to destroy it. And when the fighting navy of England shall be finally humbled, the commercial navy must follow in a great measure its fate. But, indeed, the nations of a wiser age will probably cease to think foreign commerce worth protecting or contesting at the expense of naval armaments. They will find a much more useful employment of their industry in the endless improvement of internal economy (at present so miserably neglected in our own country), than in the manufacture of luxuries for foreign markets.

While thus anticipating the declining importance of England in the rank of nations, we may feel a stronger interest in looking forward to the future greatness of America (as soon as we can surmount the mortification of having lost her as a dependency), than we could feel in viewing the rising magnitude of states with which we never had any intimate connexion; because, as we have observed, it will

seem to be England still, that is pre-eminent among the nations, when a vast continent is inhabited by people of English descent and names, when maxims first derived from England are the basis of their social system, and when English authors are the authors most familiarly read and admired, by perhaps, far more than a hundred millions of persons.

The character and circumstances of such a people are subjects of the highest curiosity, not from the present rank which this people holds in the civilized world, but as affording some prognostics of the future moral condition of a continent, which will probably soon become, in every part, finally independent of all the rest of the globe, and from the wide separation of all its habitable regions from the other continents, will become a world of its own. We look with great interest on the disclosure of the features and proportions of a form, which is growing fast toward a gigantic magnitude; and on the first symptoms of character, in a youth who is born to be a monarch.

Knowing what long periods of time are required, even in the happiest progress of states, to eradicate evils admitted into the first constitution of the society, and that, on the contrary, time often but operates to confirm them, we look forward with a degree of apprehensiveness to a period when national foibles, as an indulgent moralist may be willing at present to denominate them, will perhaps have become aggravated into most pernicious vices, infecting cities yet unbuilt, and the unnumbered cultivators of regions darkened as yet with ancient woods, where not one civilized man has ever wandered. If we should see the corruptions of civilization advancing far more rapidly than its refinements; if we should observe the faculties of a people matured to the perfection of cunning, while yet remaining stationary in the very rudiments of scientific speculation; if we should see a selfishness that for the most paltry advantages will slight even the plainest maxims of honesty, in a people surrounded by the inexhaustible resources and treasures which convey nature's own injunction to be liberal;—we inquire anxiously after every probable counteracting cause, which may tend to interrupt the natural progress of depravity, from such beginnings in the small state, to a complete and systematical

usurpation of the energy of the large one. We earnestly seek for any ground of hope, that the same general contempt of all moral principles, and the same oppressions, rancours, and miseries, may not overspread the new continent, which have supplied the principal materials of the history of the old. With regard also to the government among such a people, it is a glorious privilege to have begun with an arrangement founded on the simplest and most comprehensive principles, an arrangement not so decidedly fixed in all its parts as to preclude many experiments and innovations, and not too authoritatively administered to allow a boundless liberty of discussion and animadversion; but we tremble lest rash exertions of popular freedom, combined with superficial notions of the theory of government, should throw the power into the hands of parties, that will leave it at last in the hands of individuals, who will sacrifice the people in their destructive contests with one another.

The double character of description and prophecy in which we receive the accounts of a people, with so vast a prospect before them, gives peculiar interest to the communications of every sensible observer of their manners. A wandering kind of residence, of many years, in America, has enabled Mr. Janson to survey all the forms of society, in almost all the United States, much more attentively and comprehensively than if he had been a mere tour-making traveller. In consequence of his long residence or sojourn, his book has the advantage over the customary travelling journals, of being less loaded with those tedious narratives of rainy days, dirty inns, bad breakfasts, and disasters to coats, hats, stockings, or boots, which have now, we believe, established their right to at least a fourth part of every volume of travels. Mr. Janson intermixes a portion of this kind of history, but it is given chiefly on occasions where it is as much a description of the manners and habits of the people, as a story of his personal adventures. His book contains, in a very immethodical form, a large share of curious and useful information; and we wish we were not compelled to perceive any of the usual symptoms of book-making, and that Mr. Janson had been induced to compress the two costly volumes (for he proposes a second) into one. There are many things inserted, which we think have no proper

place in an account of the present state of America, especially some details relating purely to the War of Independence, and which have been purchased and read before, or must be purchased and read again, in the regular histories of that war. As he deemed this a lawful expedient for giving the proper dimensions to the volume, we must commend his moderation, for he might easily have taken ten times as much from the same quarter. In these unnecessary details we include the biographical sketches of Gates, Putnam, Hamilton, Arnold, Pinckney, and several other individuals. We are not convinced of the necessity of enlarging, at this time, on the machinations of the French minister Genet, and introducing his correspondence with members of the American government; of relating at length the quarrel and judicial proceedings about a ship of a Mr. Ogden, which was employed in General Miranda's expedition; or of occupying eight pages with a clumsy burlesque "from the pen of the Hon. H. H. Blackenridge," on the order of the Cincinnati, a subject, to be sure, on which better writing would have been thrown away. The tedious and vexatious protraction of proceedings in courts of law is not such a surprising novelty, as to require long extracts from term reports, to convince us of its possible existence in America; Mr. Janson's assertion would have been quite a sufficient authority. The ample history of two rival Anglo-American companies of players, is extremely well-judged and well-timed, if it is really intended as a bitter satire on our country, which, amidst the gloomy presages and astonishing events of the present crisis, is completely at leisure, as we have occasion to perceive, to be interested about such vicious trifles. Whimsical and pompous advertisements are a harmless amusement enough, but to us our indigenous produce would have seemed too plentiful to need any importation across the Atlantic. One or two of them, indeed, have a certain nationality in their extravagance which entitled them to be introduced. The mention of Mr. Emmett, now a distinguished pleader in the courts of New York, and formerly one of the United Irishmen, is accompanied by an account of the principal persons of that society, and of some of the proceedings which terminated in the melancholy events of 1798. Now, we have heard of the additional virtues im-

parted to wines by being taken on a long voyage and brought back again, but we cannot conceive how the clearness or importance of an historical document can be improved by being thus made to traverse thousands of miles of sea. The story of the adventures and sufferings of Generals Whalley and Goffe, who had been among the judges that condemned Charles the First, and being proscribed at the Restoration, concealed themselves many years, till their death, in Connecticut, is an article foreign to what should be the purpose of the book, yet so interesting, that the reader cannot wish it to have been omitted. The numerous extracts from newspapers would seem to indicate, that political wisdom seldom finds a more dignified vehicle in the United States. And certainly there may easily be as much eloquence and sound reasoning in the comments of a newspaper, as in a speech of Mr. Randolph or Mr. Otis; but Mr. Janson would have been much more sparing of these extracts, if he had duly considered the difficulty of making them look respectable, long after the occasions to which they refer, in another country which has newspapers and squabbles of its own, and in a volume which costs two guineas.

The omission of what we should deem injudiciously inserted, would deduct perhaps one-third of the substance of the book. For the rest, though we may have our objections to the quality of particular parts, we think Mr. Janson has contributed very materially to extend our acquaintance with the people of America. Being disappointed in the projects with which he went to that country, suffering a very serious loss, in company with many other persons, through a disgraceful proceeding of the government of Georgia, and experiencing occasionally some marks of the aversion which he informs us is still entertained by a large proportion of the Americans against Englishmen, it was perhaps inevitable for him to contemplate the American character under the influence of feelings tending to aggravate its faults. But we think we perceive the general prevalence of an equitable judgment, and that he does not consciously allow himself in any misrepresentation. His attention has been directed in a certain degree to most of the subjects of a European's inquiries concerning the United States; the climate and face of the country, the manners, the population, the accommo-

dations of abode and travelling, the extension of territory, the political contests, and the prospects of emigrants. We could have wished for more information respecting the state of knowledge in the several classes of people; and also some conjectures as to the proportions in which they are employed in the different branches of industry.

Mr. Janson has been more attentive to separate facts than to the connexion of various facts with one another, or the general deductions from the whole. Even without such deductions, it had been better if the facts had been more classified. His moral map of America is dissected into such small pieces, and these pieces are so effectually displaced, that it is difficult to arrange into a tolerable order in our minds, the information which these dislocated particulars are really adapted to supply. As Mr. Janson probably, from the first, recorded facts and observations without intending to assume the privileges of the narrative series of the traveller, it might have been the best method to have had a number of distinct heads, under each of which all the articles of the same nature should have been inserted.

His testimony confirms the allegations of Volney, and very many former deponents, against the climate of the United States, as being in a high degree oppressive and insalubrious. The severest extremes of heat and cold afflict them all, except the two or three most southern states, the heat of which therefore in summer, it may well be imagined, is intolerable to persons brought up in the temperature of such a country as England. And the inclemency of seasons consists not only in the regular extremes, in summer and winter, but also in sudden violent changes, which may take place indifferently at one season or another. To the sufferings and diseases caused by these extremes of weather, are to be added all the inconveniences contributed to the account by the exhalations of vast stagnant marshes, and by an infinity of reptiles and mosquitoes.

In traversing each part of the Union, Mr. Janson was attentive to the natural produce, and to the state of the cultivation. He has given various particulars relative to the culture of indigo, cotton, rice, Indian corn, and tobacco.

Being advised to purchase a few hogsheads of the latter

plant, as a convenient mode of remittance to England, and being at the time too much in haste to inspect the article himself, our author relied, as he informs us, on the integrity of the Quakers with whom he transacted, and learned the propriety of cautioning those who may trade to Philadelphia for tobacco, not to trust to the weights marked on the hogsheds, but stipulate to have them re-weighed. In his three hogsheds, the weight as marked in a British custom-house was nearly five cwt. less than it had been marked in America! And this kind of deception, he says, is very usual.

The work is deficient in point of information, respecting the domestic character of the Americans, as displayed in their forms of politeness, the cast of conversation in the different ranks (if we may employ that term), the treatment, estimate, accomplishments, and influence of the women, and the education of children. The author tells us he was not so happy as to become a lover in America; but it was not, therefore, necessary that he should hardly seem to recognize the existence of the female sex on a great continent; the moral destiny of the inhabitants of which, as of every other civilized country, will depend so much on the education and character of that sex. Perhaps the interrogative impertinence of the Misses Archbold, who harassed him so cruelly on the day after his arrival, irritated him into a vow that he would never condescend to notice or mention their countrywomen as long as he should live. And, as if in desperate revenge, he fills page after page with the praises and adventures of a lady of *his own* country, the magnanimous wife of Major Acland, a British officer employed in the American war. Without making any pretensions to gallantry, we do think it is an unpardonable offence against the women of America, that their entire number, amounting possibly to fifteen hundred thousand, should not be deemed worthy to deserve as much space in his book, as one Englishwoman that happened to tread on their ground in the year 1775. But it is not on the score of *sentiment* that we remark on this subject; it is on account of the absolute moral and political importance of the women, as constituting the one-half of a nation, and most essentially influencing the whole, that we allege, not a defect of feeling, but of observation and judgment, against a traveller, who, in surveying a foreign coun-

try, overlooks the character and situation of the female part of its inhabitants. Two or three circumstances, casually mentioned, respecting children, give us a very unfavourable surmise as to their education. Somewhat more is said about servants, and the following short passage may convey the essence of the information.

"The arrogance of domestics in this land of republican liberty and equality, is particularly calculated to excite the astonishment of strangers. To call persons of this description *servants*, or to speak of their *master* or *mistress*, is a grievous affront. Having called one day at the house of a gentleman of my acquaintance, on knocking at the door, it was opened by a servant maid, whom I had never before seen, as she had not been long in his family. The following is the dialogue, word for word, which took place on this occasion: 'Is your master at home?'—'I have no master.'—'Don't you live here?'—'I stay here.'—'And who are you then?'—'Why, I am Mr. —'s *help*. I'd have you to know, *man*, that I am no *sarvant*; none but *negers* are *sarvants*.'"—Pp. 87, 88.

With regard to the prominent and general qualities which constitute what may be called the national character, the reader of the work before us will be led to form a different estimate from what his benevolence would have wished. The conviction will be forced upon him that, however melancholy may be the moral condition of Europe, it is not to America that he is to look at present for the reign of virtue, for liberal views, for the rapid progress of knowledge, or for amiable manners. He cannot avoid discerning that the predominant principle is an unremitting passion for gain; the cultivation of taste, the studies of abstract truth, and even the splendid attractions of ambition, are regarded with indifference or contempt in this grand pursuit; and we wish it could not be added that a scrupulous morality is seldom allowed to impede its success. The transaction of the Georgian government, related p. 263, is an indication that the moral character of the individual is also that of the state. All things are reduced to pecuniary calculation, nature and art, sea and land, the things on the earth, and the things under the earth. While a man of taste and reflection contemplated one of the vast rivers, as a noble spectacle in the natural world, the American would be con-

sidering it merely as a channel of trade; while the one looked with a sentiment of almost superstitious awe into the gloom of an immeasurable forest, the venerable kingdom of silence and solitude, excepting as haunted by mysterious and invisible beings, with which his imagination would people the twilight of every grove, the other would be reckoning how many years and dollars would be required to burn and clear a space of it, from this river to yonder hill. We must acknowledge, however, that the passion for gain approaches nearer, than in any other of its forms, to something respectable and magnanimous, in this spirit of enterprise, which is continually invading and conquering the Western wilderness with the implements and fires of cultivation.

Another conspicuous characteristic of the Americans is, an ostentation of their freedom. They feel it a sufficient license to be rude, that they cannot be *compelled* to be otherwise. They are unable to comprehend, how manners softened into mildness and deference, can at all consist with a feeling of independence. They cannot verify it to their own satisfaction that they really are not slaves, but by continually reminding you that you are not their master; and this is done alternately by inattention and obtrusive familiarity.

The excessive curiosity of the Americans, of which our author often complains, might be sometimes teasing and impertinent; but we think he was rather too irritable under his frequent examinations and cross-examinations. And we may be allowed to suggest, that his vanity would, perhaps, have been a little piqued, if the good people had not thought it worth while even to ask him a single question, about either himself or his country. The following dialogue might perhaps have become amusing, if his impatience had not so suddenly snapped it off.

"Seeing a pleasant little cottage on the river Connecticut, and understanding that it was to be let, I knocked at the door, which was opened by a woman, of whom I inquired the rent of the house.—'And where are you from?' was the reply.—'Pray, madam,' I again asked, 'is this house to be let?'—'Be you from New York or Boston?' said the inquisitive dame. The place was situated about half-way between those two towns.

Impatient at this mode of reply—"I'll thank you, madam," I repeated, 'to acquaint me with the price demanded for this little place?'—"Pray what may you be?" rejoined she, as if fully determined not to satisfy my inquiry till I had gratified her curiosity. I was not less resolute than herself, and turned my back in disgust."—P. 87.

The manners and customs are incomparably the worst in the most Southern states; and the author is ingenuous enough to ascribe it to the total estrangement from all knowledge, and inattention to all institutions of religion. At Edenton, one of the principal towns of North Carolina, the only place of worship is now reduced to a ^{shelter} for cattle and hogs from the heat of the sun. A horrid kind of *amusement* is acknowledged by the American writers to prevail in these states—it is called *gouging*.

"Passing, in company with other travellers, through the state of Georgia, our attention was arrested by a gouging match. We found the combatants, as Morse describes, fast clenched by the hair, and their thumbs endeavouring to force a passage into each other's eyes; while several of the bystanders were betting upon the first eye to be turned out of its socket. For some time the combatants avoided the *thumb stroke* with dexterity. At length they fell to the ground, and in an instant the uppermost sprung up with his antagonist's eye in his hand! The savage crowd applauded, while, sick with horror, we galloped away from the infernal scene. The name of the sufferer was John Butler, a Carolinian, who, it seems, had been dared to combat by a Georgian; and the first eye was for the honour of the state to which they respectively belonged.

"The eye is not the only feature which suffers on these occasions. Like dogs and bears, they use their teeth* and feet, with the most savage ferocity, upon each other.

"A brute, in human form, named John Stanley, of Bertie county, North Carolina, sharpens his teeth with a file, and boasts of his dependence upon them in fight. This monster will also exult in relating the account of the noses and ears he has bitten off, and the cheeks he has torn.

"A man of the name of Thomas Penrise, then living in Edenton, in the same state, attempting at cards to cheat some half-drunken sailors, was detected. A scuffle ensued; Penrise

* During the author's residence in North Carolina, Mr. Standen, the postmaster, and a merchant of Edenton, had a part of his cheek bitten off in an affray with O'Mally, a tavern-keeper in that town.

knocked out the saddle, then gouged out three eyes, bit off an ear, tore a few cheeks, and made good his retreat.

"Near the same place, a schoolmaster, named Jarvis Lucas, was beset by three men, one Horton, his son, and son-in-law. These ruffians beat the unfortunate man till his life was despaired of, having bitten, gouged, and kicked him unmercifully. On the trial of an indictment for this outrageous assault, a Carolina court of justice amerced them in a small fine only."—Pp. 301, —303.

With what contempt we may justly regard a government, that does not instantly put an end to such a practice by main force! It does not surprise us to find, after these statements, that duels are exceedingly frequent.

Another abomination of these Southern states is the number, treatment, and continual importation of slaves. Mr. Janson, with deserved scorn, contrasts this practical enormity, with that bombast about freedom, which shame has not disabled the organs of the people of even these states to utter. He had an extensive view of the miserable condition of the slaves, and he describes with the energy of indignant but not extravagant feeling. His descriptions are much of the same colour with those which have so often represented to us the general oppression, and occasional excesses of barbarity, exercised on the same race in the West Indies; and on the persevering example of England, as exhibited in those islands, may doubtless be charged, in no small degree, the prevalence of the same execrable system in the American states. We could make large and most impressive extracts; but we exult that, as to England, the time is at last arrived, when it is no longer necessary to renew these odious representations in order to excite the nation to press the abolition of the traffic, which is the foundation of the evil, and we are confident they will never be necessary in order to preclude repentance of that decision, when it shall have been fully carried into effect. As to the United States, the cause must be left to Providence and its avenging plagues. But we are aware the federal government passed an act some years since that the slave trade should cease in the year 1808, and we will endeavour to hope, notwithstanding what we can recollect to have been done in England, that this decree of long-protracted justice may not prove nugatory when the term shall be completed.

As a very welcome relief and contrast to these views of the American civilization, we wish we had room for Mr. Janson's account of the general character and administration of the criminal laws, and his statements respecting the prisons, which seem well contrived for schools of industry and reformation.

Respectable efforts are making in Philadelphia in favour of science and literature ; but we fear a long train of years must pass away before these will become popular attainments over the wide extent of the States.

The information relative to religion, is nearly confined to an account of the *essential* fanaticism of the childish followers of one Ann Leese, and the *occasional and circumstantial* fanaticism of several wiser and better denominations. We are well aware that extravagances have been committed by the Methodists, and other classes of Christians ; but we can easily perceive that Mr. Janson never thought it worth his while to inquire into the doctrines of any of them, as maintained by the more rational part of the respective societies, or to distinguish the transient or local excesses of these societies, from their more permanent character. He probably apprehended no danger of mistake in admitting the wildest aspect, which ignorance and weakness would give to a mode of religious profession, as its true and only character ; and felt himself fortunate in the opportunity of being witty by means of the term "elect." Religion itself, in the abstract, is not very familiar, we fear, to our author's thoughts, nor were we apprised of his feeling any interest about the subject, till we found the rejection of Christianity alleged among the sins of Thomas Paine, in a needless, virulent, and low invective, which occupies an entire chapter towards the end of the volume. We must not, however, refuse the due applause to some of his observations on ecclesiastical concerns. There is a happy boldness of opinion, in his approbation of a bishop for raising money to build a church, by means of a lottery set on foot for the purpose. But by telling this in England, we *will* hope he cannot mean any malicious insinuation, that if here episcopalian churches, and all their appointments, were to cease to be raised and maintained by the absolute power of the state, the cordial attachment and voluntary liberality of the people, would

ever abandon them to the necessity of supporting themselves by such ingenious expedients.

We are amused with several singular adventures, and especially, in an extreme degree, by a long and fierce nocturnal battle between an unarmed rustic and a bear, in a place named Dismal Swamp, in Virginia, in which battle the bear was vanquished and slain. The weight of the man was 191, that of the bear 305 pounds.

We are sorry to find Mr. Janson deeming it worth his while to repeat the fable, as at present it appears to us, and apparently to him also, about the man that wandered in company with a small band of savages, up the Missouri, till they found a nation of Welsh Indians, of whom it is pretended he gave a long account to a Mr. Childs, who gave it to a Mr. Toulmin, who has published it as a probable story. It was very needless to repeat it in England, after Mr. Janson and all of us know that Captain Lewis's party advanced near the head of the Missouri, and that Mr. Mackenzie traversed the region of its sources, and never saw or heard the slightest trace or tradition of such a people, though they conversed with natives who were accustomed to rove hundreds of leagues over the vast wilderness.

The last subject we have to notice, is what relates to the prospects of settlement for strangers from Europe. This the author professes to have in view as one of the chief objects of his book. And he appears to exult in having made out a strong case against emigration. But we are as sorry as he is pleased. For one of the great desiderata for those of the inhabitants of Europe, who cannot force themselves to become enamoured of eternal wars and increasing taxes, after doing their very utmost to convert their own unfashionable and perverse feelings, and who look forward with an almost hopeless anxiety to the establishment or rather ruin of their families, is some distant peaceful land, where the resources of nature are not scrambled for by an overgrown population, nor wasted by the corruption and extravagance of governments. Were there such a country, we should detest the officiousness of any man who should labour to excite the government of an old, over-populous state to prevent emigration to it. From the facts illustrated by Mr. Malthus, it appears very desirable that there could

be some grand outlet, other than a field of battle, for a part of the population of a crowded country, unless it were possible the government of such a country should acquire the wisdom to open to the last acre, all its own resources of cultivation.

As to the clandestine emigration, under circumstances of the most revolting inconvenience, of numbers of the Irish peasantry, to which fact this author wishes to call the attention of the state, we think it proves one thing at least, that they are beyond all endurance wretched where they are; for we know it is a general law of human nature to desert with reluctance the native soil. Let Mr. Janson, and any other writer, do all that correct representations of the circumstances of a distant country will do, to confirm this natural partiality; but they would deserve the severest reprobation of every philanthropist, if they should endeavour, from the mere bigotry of patriotism, to raise the arm of power to intercept miserable beings in their escape to a place, where they may yet make one more trial, whether the possession of life is to be considered as a blessing or a curse.

We hope America may yet become a happy asylum for Europeans, when a much greater extent of the Western country shall be cleared, and the climate improved by the cultivation, when good and direct roads shall have given a facility of reaching the interior of the continent from the Atlantic coast, when there shall be a regular system for disposing of its produce to the greatest advantage, and when the population shall be numerous enough to create some of the conveniences and refinements of society, without being so numerous as to raise extremely high the price of land. For the present, America is a most excellent place for mechanics and hardy rural labourers, excepting what is to be apprehended from an unfriendly climate, and from destructive diseases, which are indefinitely aggravated by the gross mode of living, and the frightful consumption of raw spirits. But the persons who wish to establish themselves by the purchase of lands, will feel great hesitation after reading the statements of Mr. Janson, respecting the expense of supporting a family while a most tedious journey is made into the back settlements, merely, in the first place, to determine where to settle, the toil of clearing the land, the exorbitant

price of labour, and the difficulty of finding a market for the produce, when it shall exceed the wants of the family. As to purchasing land, without personal inspection, of the commissioners appointed for selling it, in London, or any of the cities of the United States, we are confident no man will do it after reading some parts of this book, which describe the nefarious deceptions practised by those agents. We hold it our duty to present an extract relative to these subjects, and with this we conclude our review.

* To enumerate the different frauds, and to lay open the arts practised upon deluded Englishmen by these gangs of coalesced adventurers, would alone exceed the limits of these sheets. To such a pitch of bare-faced deceit did they arrive, that the American government was at length obliged to be its own land-agent, and to open offices for retailing land to English settlers. To the disgraceful and villanous deeds of land-speculators, Dr. Priestley, and indeed most of the recent English settlers, could bear testimony. False titles, forged grants, fictitious patents, and deeds of bargain and sale of land in the clouds were daily imposed upon the unwary. Sometimes, indeed, the conspirators would discover a tract, which was under some indispensable necessity of being sold, of which they would make a *bona fide* purchase, and under this cloak have they conveyed it, again and again, perhaps a dozen times. In other instances, the land granted was described to begin at a *sycamore* tree on such a point; from thence running in a parallel line till it struck a *mulberry* tree; from thence running due south till intersected by an *oak*. In short, the described portion comprised the most valuable timber, and rich, clear land, and all for one dollar per acre. In these cases the purchaser would often find his land, and the remains of the trees described; but alas! instead of rich meads, fertile plains, valuable forests, and meandering rivers, he found a barren desert, not producing a single shrub. The trees had been planted for deception only, and the navigable rivers had found another course. Colonel Michael Payne, of North Carolina, marshal of the state, informed me that he was obliged to attend a sale of land in the interior part of the state, which had been levied upon under an execution issuing out of the federal court, and that upon his journey over one of the most barren and rocky countries he had ever travelled, he observed a party of men planting trees. So strange an employment in so dreary a spot induced the colonel to inquire of the labourers what benefit they expected to derive from their labour. He also observed two or three carts, loaded with young trees, and a man at a little distance,

surveying the ground, who said, in answer to the colonel's questions, that the land was advertised for sale in London at half a guinea per acre, and that they were 'cooking it up a little.' This cookery consisted in planting a few young trees, the choicest growth of a far distant forest, as divisional lines and marks. The cook proved to be a confederate land-speculator, and a *ci-devant* congress man. The colonel added, that from the nature of the soil, and unpropitious situation of the land, a colony of English farmers could not make it worth a shilling.

"The new state of Kentucky is more extravagantly described and extolled than any other part of the United States. From the accounts I have collected from such as have explored that country, the land is certainly of a superior quality to some of the states, and well watered by large rivers. It has increased much in population since the peace of 1783, but that it does not equally allure all who visit it to settle there, is certain. Many have returned, after struggling against the numerous difficulties of subsisting in a new country, one, two, and three years before they could make their daily bread. A new settler should have what is here termed 'plenty of force;' that is, he should not attempt the planting and farming business without about a dozen labourers. This assistance, with two or three hundred pounds, may in a few years complete the clearing of a few hundred acres of land, the erecting of log-houses, and other necessary work. This land, thus cleared, will produce tobacco, hemp, wheat, barley, oats, clover, and most European fruits and vegetables. But, while we mention the quality of the land, another question naturally arises; namely, how is the superfluous produce to be carried to market? It is at present above a thousand miles to export produce from the extreme parts of Kentucky, Ohio, and Tennessee, by water to the commercial cities in the United States, and a great many hundred by land! We find none of these difficulties fairly demonstrated by the writers and compilers of American voyages, history, and travels. The corn of these states could not, without great loss, be sold in Philadelphia, at the rate of the grain grown in its vicinity."

This last sentence, we are confident, is incorrect.

ON MEMOIR-WRITING.

Memoir of the Life and Writings of the Hon. Henry Home, of Kames; containing Sketches of the Progress of Literature and general Improvement in Scotland, during the greater part of the Eighteenth Century. 2 vols. 4to. 1807.

THE principal facts relative to the individual who forms the leading subject of this work, may be given in a few words. Henry Home was the son of a country gentleman of small fortune, and was born in the year 1696. About the age of sixteen, he was bound by indenture to attend the office of a writer to the signet in Edinburgh, with a view to prepare himself for the profession of a solicitor. Being sent one evening by his master with some papers to the President of the Court of Session, he was so handsomely treated by the venerable judge and his daughter, and so enchanted with the character of dignity and elegance in their manners and situation, that he was instantly fired with the ambition of attaining eminence in the public profession of the law, and resolved to qualify himself for an advocate. He commenced a most laborious course of study, as well in the departments of literature and science, as in the knowledge more peculiarly appropriate to his intended profession, and made a rapid progress in them all. He was called to the bar at the age of twenty-seven, published various writings on legal subjects, obtained at length the first eminence as a pleader, and was appointed at the age of fifty-six one of the judges of the Court of Session, by the title of Lord Kames. His moral and metaphysical studies were prosecuted with as much ardour as those of the law; he was personally acquainted with most of the philosophers of the time; and by means of his writings became celebrated as a philosopher himself. When he was near the age of seventy, his fortune received the addition of a very large estate, left to his wife, to whom he had been married at the age of forty-five; this estate he was almost enthusiastically fond of cultivating and adorning. About the same period that he obtained this wealth, his legal rank was raised to that of a Lord of Justiciary, a judge of the supreme criminal tribunal in Scotland, of which office

he continued to discharge the duties till his death, in 1782, in the eighty-seventh year of his age.

Lord Kames was a very conspicuous man in his time, and deserved to pass down to posterity in a record of considerable length. He has rendered a material service to literature by his "Elements of Criticism;" and from the work before us it is evident, that his professional studies contributed the most important advantages to both the theory and the administration of law in Scotland. The improvement in agriculture also, in that country, seems to have taken its rise, in a great measure, from his zeal and his example. He received from nature an extraordinary activity of mind, to which his multiplied occupations allowed no remission, even in his advanced age; we find him as indefatigable in his eightieth year, as in the most vigorous and ambitious season of his life. The versatility of his talents was accompanied by a strength and acuteness, which penetrated to the essence of the subjects to which they were applied. The intentions with which he prosecuted such a wide diversity of studies, appear often excellent; very few men so ingenious, so speculative, so systematic, and occasionally so fanciful, have kept practical utility so generally in view. The great influence which he exerted over some of the younger philosophers of the time, several of the most distinguished of whom were proud to acknowledge themselves his pupils, was employed to determine their speculations to useful purposes. His conduct in the office of judge appears to have impressed every impartial man that witnessed it, with an invariable opinion of his talents and integrity. As a domestic and social man, his character was that of frankness, good humour, and extreme vivacity. His prompt intelligence continually played around him, and threw its rays on every subject that even casualty could introduce into conversation. His defects as a speculatist were, that he had not, like the very first order of minds, that simplicity of intellect that operates rather in the form of power than of ingenuity, and is too strong to be either captivated or amused by the spacious fallacies of a fantastic theory; and that, as far as we have the means of judging, he had a higher respect for the conjectures of mere reason, than for the authority of revelation.

The name of Lord Kames is sufficiently eminent to render an account of his life interesting, though it appeared more than twenty years after his death. But we greatly admire the modesty with which Lord Woodhouselee, better known to the literary world under the name of Mr. Fraser Tytler, has been waiting, during this extended interval, for some abler hand to execute a work, to which he, very unaccountably, professes himself inadequate. This long delay, however, has been of immense service to the magnitude of the performance, which has perhaps been growing many years, and has risen and expanded at length, into a most ample shade of cypress over the tomb of Lord Kames.

In order to give the book this prodigious size, the author has chosen to take advantage of Lord Kames's diversified studies, to enlarge on the several subjects of those studies; of his profession of law, to deduce the history of Scottish law, and of the lives of its most distinguished professors and practitioners, accompanied by dissertations on law in general; and of his happening to be a Scotchman, to go back as far as the tenth century in order to prove that there were scholars then in Scotland, and return all the way downward, proving that there have been scholars there ever since. In his youth Lord Kames was acquainted with a particular species of beaux, peculiar to those times, which animals had, if our author is to be believed, a singular faculty of uniting the two functions of fluttering and thinking; and therefore several individuals are to be separately described, (vol. i. p. 57, &c). It was extremely proper to give us a short account of the species, as forming a curious branch of entomology; but it does not seem to have been so indispensable to describe, individually, beau Forrester and beau Hamilton. Because one of Lord Kames's early friends, a Mr. Oswald, was a member of parliament, a sheet and a half must be occupied by uninteresting letters, which this Mr. Oswald wrote to him about temporary and party politics. A larger space is filled with letters from Dean Tucker, which, excepting one, and perhaps two or three paragraphs of another, are not of the smallest consequence, further than their being written to Lord Kames; but therefore they are inserted. Lord Kames was acquainted with David Hume, and therefore, in his life, there must be a very

long account of the publication and reception of "Hume's Treatise of Human Nature," with a very long extract from its conclusion. Lord Kames wrote a well known book called the "Elements of Criticism," and therefore actually fifteen pages at once are filled with an extract from that book. We have taken all due pains, but ineffectually, to reconcile ourselves to this mode of enlarging the size of a book by uninteresting letters, and indolent extracts. But even if a large work were constructed without this lazy expedient, and consisted almost wholly of the honest workmanship of the author, we have still an invincible dislike to the practice of pouring forth the miscellaneous stores of a common-place book, of relating the literary, the legal, the philosophical, and the political transactions of half a century, and of expending narrative and panegyric to a vast amount on a crowd of all sorts of people, under the form and pretence of recording the life of an individual. It is an obvious charge against this species of writing, that it can have no assignable limits, for as the object is undefinable, we can never be certain that it is gained; and therefore the writer may go on adding volume to volume, still pretending that all this is necessary to his plan, till his whole stock of miscellaneous materials is exhausted; and then he may tell us with a critical air of knowing what he is about, that he has executed, however imperfectly, the plan which he had considered as best adapted for doing justice to the interesting subject. But if instead of this he were to tell us, (perhaps on having found another drawerful of materials) that another volume was necessary for giving right proportions and a right conclusion to his work, we could not contradict him, because we should not know where to seek for the rules or principles by which to decide *what* would be a proper form or termination; unless we were to refer the case to be settled by our patience, or our purse, according to which authorities in criticism, we may possibly have passed, a good way back, the chapter or paragraph, which appeared very proper for a conclusion. Every work ought to have so far a specific object, that we can form some notion what materials are properly or improperly introduced, and within what compass the whole should be contained. Those works that disdain to recognize any standard of prescription

according to which books are appointed to be made, may fairly be regarded as outlaws of literature, which every prowling reviewer has a right to fall upon wherever he finds them.

Another serious objection against this practice of making a great book of a mass of materials so diverse that they have no natural connexion, and in such quantity that the slender narrative of an individual's life is insufficient to form an artificial connexion, is, that it is extremely injurious to the good order of our intellectual arrangements; as it accustoms the reader to that broken, immethodical, and discursive manner of thought which is preventive or destructive of the power both of prolonged attention and continuous reasoning. Just when a man has resolved, and possibly begun, to put his mind under severe discipline, in order to cure its rambling propensities, when he has perhaps vowed to do penance in mathematics for his mental dissipation, he is met by one moretricious pair of volumes after another, presenting all the seducing attractions of novelty, variety, facility of perusal, amusement somewhat dignified by an admixture of grave sense, and all this in an attire of the utmost elegance, from the type to the outside covering. The unfortunate sinner renounces his vows, throws away his mathematics, and becomes as abandoned a literary libertine as ever. If it be said, that a book thus composed, merits, at the most, no more serious accusation than merely that of its being a miscellany, and that we have many miscellanies and collectanea which are well received by the public, as a legitimate class of books; we answer, yes, we have miscellanies and collectanea, without number, and they are a pest of literature; they reduce our reading to a useless amusement, and promote a vicious taste that nauseates the kind of reading which alone can supply well-ordered knowledge, and assist the attainment of a severe and comprehensive judgment. These heterogeneous productions drive away the regular *treatises*, the best auxiliaries of mental discipline, from the tables of both our male and female readers; and the volumes of our Lockes, and Hartleys, and Reids, are reduced to become a kind of fortifying wall to the territory of spiders, on the remotest and dustiest shelf in all the room.

Against an assemblage of multibarious biography of distinguished men, under the ostensible form of a record of the

life of an individual, we have to observe that it has the fallacious effect of making that individual appear as always the king of the whole tribe. This would not be the effect, if merely so much were mentioned, concerning other eminent persons, as should be indispensable to the history of the one immediately in question. These short references might just give us an impression of the high rank of those other persons, and induce us to seek in the proper quarter for more ample information concerning them: they would be brought into no comparison with the person whose life is exclusively to be related. But when so much is said of them, that we seem to have a competent memoir of each, so that we do not want to inquire any further, and when all these memoirs together do not occupy so large a space as that filled by the chief personage, this individual comes to hold in our thoughts a magnitude superior to that of the rest, nearly in proportion to the ampler space he fills in the book. There is enough to bring them into comparison with him, and too little to illustrate and support their claims in that comparison; and they seem but assembled as bashaws round their Grand Turk. In the work before us, Lord Kames appears (for we have been at pains, with the help of Erasmus's *De copia verborum et rerum*, to find a nobler simile than the last), like Jupiter on the top of the Scottish Olympus, looking kindly, though majestically, down on the inferior personages of the worshipful assembly, such as Hume, Reid, Adam Smith, Millar, and many others. Lord Woodhouselee does not expressly *proclaim* the superiority, and perhaps no more did Mercury or Ganymedes; it is enough that Jupiter did, and that Lord Kames does, sit on the most spacious throne. But then let us turn to the historian and eulogist of some other member of that great philosophic hierarchy, and the venerable order is strangely confounded and revolutionized; Dr. Adam Smith, for instance, places David Hume on the proudest eminence, and Kames, and all the rest of them, are made to know their places. This game of shifting dignities, this transferring of regal honours, must continue, till each panegyrist shall have the discretion to confine his work so much to an individual, as to avoid the invidiousness of constantly, in effect, running a parallel between him and his contemporaries.

We also object to the telling, in the life of one man, of so much about the life, and works, and actions of another, because if the life of that other is likewise to be written, the biographer of the former actually forestalls or pilfers the materials which are wanted by the biographer of the latter. And thus the same thing is told twice, or, if but once, it is told in the wrong place. But it is certain to be told twice, for the trade of mutual borrowing, and mutual stealing, never throve better than among the biographers of the present day.

In reading this, and some late voluminous works, purporting to be the lives of particular persons, and in observing the multitude of memoirs of other persons appended or interwoven, we have earnestly wished, that each country, and especially North Britain, had been a good while since, provided with a standard approved dictionary of all its names of any consequence; with a sufficient quantity of information under each, and with a concise supplement regularly added every few years. In that case, the writer of a particular and eminently distinguished life, would not have needed, and could have had no pretext, to swell the bulk of his work with an account of every person, of the smallest note, whom he had occasion to mention, as contemporary, or in any manner connected, with the principal person, or even as having preceded him by years or centuries. We might then be referred, in one line, to the article in the dictionary, to be consulted at leisure, and go on, without circuit or interruption, with the main subject. We still wish this were done, with the utmost haste; since we do not know how many more ponderous and costly works, like the present, may else come out, loaded with secondary subjects, and even with the substance of some of the very same articles which have encumbered this and recent publications. For making such a dictionary, it will be of service to consult these works of which we have complained, and extract from them several articles relating to persons of whom, though deserving of some notice, no information, as it should seem, may be found anywhere else. There is, for instance, in the book before us, a particular account of an obscure, but apparently an able man, of the name of Colin Maclaurin. It was a disappointment to us

not to see this followed by some account of Maclaurin's master, another obscure man of the name of Newton.

Having thus honestly protested against this mode of raising a large and costly book by collecting a heap of heterogeneous materials, and having informed our readers that the life of Lord Kames, though very long and busy, forms but a rather slight and arbitrary combination of the contents of these volumes, we must now express our opinion of the merit of these contents separately considered; and produce some extracts illustrative of their quality. And we are prompt to testify, that in many instances their quality is high. Lord Woodhouselee is an able and practised thinker, possessed of ample stores of learning and general knowledge, well acquainted with the history, the schools, and the questions of philosophy; a discriminative judge of character, and writing in a style which we deem a finished example of what may be called transparent diction. It is so singularly lucid, so free from all affected rhetoric and artificial turns of phrase, so perfectly abstracted, with the exception of a law term or two, from every dialect appropriated to a particular subject, that we have never viewed thoughts through a purer medium. It is so pure and perfect, that we can read on a considerable way without our attention being arrested by the medium; it is as if there were nothing, if we may so express ourselves, between us and the thought. And we are made to think of the medium after some time, only by the reflection how very clearly we have apprehended the sense, even when relating to the uncouth subjects of the law, or the abstruse subjects of metaphysics. By this pure and graceful diction, we are beguiled along with the author, through several prolix and unnecessary details, without being indignant—till we are past them—that he should have occupied himself and us with things too inconsiderable to deserve a fifth part of the space they fill.

We have been greatly pleased and instructed by many of the reasonings on topics of philosophy, law, and criticism, the result of mature and comprehensive thought, and but very little tinctured by the peculiarities of any sect or school, though somewhat partial, of course, to the opinions

of Lord Kames, who, in spite of the immense disparity of age, was the intimate friend of the author's younger years. Many of his observations and statements elucidate the history and progress of law, science, and literature in Scotland. We have only to regret, that he had not elaborated his thoughts on these various subjects into a digested series of finished essays, instead of throwing them together in a mass, to swell beyond all reasonable bounds the importance of an individual. A great part of this matter might just as well have been appended to the life of any one of half a dozen other of the Scottish philosophers of the last century; a proof of the impropriety of its being all incorporated with the history of one.

As to the letters to Lord Kames, which constitute a material portion of the work, we have already said, that many of them ought to have been omitted. But a considerable number are highly distinguished by sense or ingenuity; we refer to several from Dr. Franklin, many from Mrs. Montague, one from Lord Chancellor Hardwicke on courts of equity, one or two from David Hume, and a few long ones, of great value, from Professor Walker and Dr. Reid. The very long and intimate friendship with this last eminent philosopher; continued to the death of Lord Kames. Their characters are thus amusingly contrasted by Mr. Dugald Stewart:—

“With one very distinguished character, the late Lord Kames, he (Dr. Reid) lived in the most cordial and affectionate friendship, notwithstanding the avowed opposition of their sentiments on some moral questions to which he attached the greatest importance. Both of them, however, were the friends of virtue and of mankind; and both were able to temper the warmth of free discussion with the forbearance and good-humour founded on mutual esteem. No two men, certainly, ever exhibited a more striking contrast in their conversation, or in their constitutional tempers: the one slow and cautious in his decisions, even on those topics which he had most diligently studied; reserved and silent in promiscuous society; and retaining, after all his literary eminence, the same simple and unassuming manners which he brought from his country residence: the other, lively rapid, and communicative; accustomed by his professional pursuits, to wield with address the weapons of controversy, and not averse to a trial of his powers on questions the most foreign

to his ordinary habits of inquiry. But these characteristic differences, while to their common friends, they lent an additional charm to the distinguishing merits of each, served *only* to enliven their social intercourse, and to cement their mutual attachment."—Vol II., p. 230.

Their correspondence, and no doubt their conversations, were directed very much to the most abstruse questions of physical and metaphysical science. Indeed, we deem it honourable to Lord Kames, that most of his friendships appear to have been as laborious as they were sincere. The whole quantity of intellectual faculty existing among his friends was put in permanent requisition. And when he at any time heard of strong minds among his contemporaries, beyond the circle of his acquaintance, it was not long before he was devising how to trepan them, as elephants are caught in the east, in order to make them work. He had all kinds of burdens ready for them, and no burden so light, that any of them could frisk and gambol under it, in the wantonness of superfluous strength. It was at their peril, that any of them showed signs of thinking little of the difficulty of a discussion in law or criticism; they were sure to have a whole system of metaphysics laid on their backs at the next turn. Very early in life he commenced this plan, and thought himself on the point of catching one of the stoutest of the elephantine race. Dr. Clarke had some years before published his celebrated *Demonstration of the Being and Attributes of God*. Mr Ilome, at the age of twenty-seven, wrote him a long letter, proposing objections, and demanding new arguments and solutions. Its uncere- monious and almost presumptuous style, however, evinced a want of skill as yet in his inveigling art; the device was too coarsely adjusted to trepan one of the most discerning of the giant species, who just stopped a few minutes in passing, tossed about with his trunk, as if in scorn of the design, some, of the piles of materials with which it had been intended to load him, and then moved quietly off into the forest. —In simple language, Dr. Clarke wrote him a short, civil, and argumentative letter, and the correspondence went no further.

Lord Kames had always a very strong partiality to metaphysical studies; and he evinced even in that letter to Dr.

Samuel Clarke, which we have already noticed with disapprobation of its spirit, an acuteness adapted to excel in abstract speculations. In first introducing him in the character of a philosopher, Lord Woodhouselee takes occasion to make some observations on the tendency and value of metaphysical researches.

“Allowing them to be conversant about the noblest part of our frame, the nature and powers of the human soul; and granting that they give the most vigorous exercise to the understanding, by training the mind to an earnest and patient attention to its own operations; still I fear it must be admitted, that as those abstract studies are beyond the limits of the faculties of the bulk of mankind, no conclusion thence derived can have much influence on human conduct. Even the anxiety shown by metaphysical writers to apologize for their favourite pursuits, by endeavouring, with great ingenuity, to deduce from them a few practical consequences with respect to life and manners, is strong proof of the native infertility of the soil, on which so much labour is bestowed to produce so small a return. It is not much to the praise of this science, that the most subtle and ingenious spirits have, for above two thousand years, assiduously exercised themselves in its various subjects of discussion, and have not yet arrived at a set of fundamental principles on which the thinking world is agreed. Neither have the uses, to which this sort of reasoning has sometimes been applied, tended to enhance its estimation. The attempts that have been made to found morality on metaphysical principles, have for certain been prejudicial, on the whole, to the cause of virtue. The acutest of the sceptical writers, availing themselves of Mr. Locke's doctrine of the origin of ideas, and the consequences he has thence drawn respecting morals, have done much more harm by weakening our belief in the reality of moral distinctions, than the ablest of their opponents, combating them on the same ground, and with the same weapons, have found it possible to repair. The baneful industry of the former has, it is true, made the labours of the latter in some degree necessary, and therefore useful; and it is in this point of view that the writings of those metaphysicians, who are antagonists of the sceptical philosophy, are entitled to attention and to praise.”—Vol. i. p. 21.

Such observations are of much weight as coming from a person so well versed in metaphysics. But it will be impossible for the reader of these volumes to believe the author can mean to be very rigid in proscribing metaphysical study,

to which we can perceive that his clear understanding is in no small degree indebted. Nor will any enlightened man, we think, condemn, without great qualification, what is evidently the sublimest class of speculations, what demands the strongest mental powers, and their severest exertion, and makes a bold effort to reach, in some small degree, that kind of knowledge, or, if we may so speak, that mode of knowing, which perhaps forms the chief or peculiar intellectual distinction between us and superior spirits. Metaphysical speculation tries to resolve all constituted things into their general elements, and those elements into the ultimate mysterious element of substance, thus leaving behind the various orders and modes of being, to contemplate being itself in its essence. It retires awhile from the consideration of truth, as predicated of particular subjects, to explore those unalterable and universal relations of ideas, which must be the primary principles of all truth. It is not content to acknowledge or to seek the respective causes of the effects which crowd every part of the creation, but would ascertain the very nature of the relation between cause and effect. Not satisfied to infer a Deity from the wise and beautiful *order* of the universe, it would desecr the proof of this sublime fact in the bare *existence* of an atom. To ascertain the laws according to which we think, is a gratifying kind of knowledge, but metaphysical speculation asks *what is it to think*, and what is that power which performs so strange an operation; it also attempts to discover the nature of the connexion of this mysterious agent with a corporeal machine; and of the relation in which it really stands to that external world, concerning which it receives so many millions of ideas. In short, metaphysical inquiry attempts to trace things to the very first stage in which they can, even to the most penetrating intelligences, be the subjects of a thought, a doubt, or a proposition; that profoundest abstraction, where they stand on the first step of distinction and remove from nonentity, and where that one question might be put concerning them, the answer to which would leave no further question possible. And having thus abstracted and penetrated to the state of pure entity, the speculation would come back, tracing it into all its modes and relations; till at last metaphysical truth, approaching nearer and nearer to

the sphere of our immediate knowledge, terminates on the confines of distinct sciences and obvious realities.

Now, it would seem evident that this inquiry into primary truth must surpass, in point of dignity, all other speculations. If any man could carry his discoveries as far, and make his proofs as strong, in the metaphysical world, as Newton did in the physical, he would be an incomparably greater man than even Newton. The charge, therefore, of being frivolous, alleged sometimes angrily, and sometimes scornfully, against this department of study, is, so far as the *subjects* are concerned, but a proof of the complete ignorance of those who make it. Ignorance may be allowed to say anything; but we are very much surprised, when we sometimes hear men of considerable thought and knowledge, declaring, almost unconditionally, against researches into pure metaphysical subjects; and also insisting, that our reasonings on moral subjects must never, for a moment, accept the pernicious aid of metaphysical distinctions. We cannot comprehend how it is possible for them to frequent the intellectual world, without often coming in view of some of the great questions peculiarly belonging to this department of thought; such as those concerning the nature of the mind, the liberty or necessity of human action, the radical distinction between good and evil, space, duration, eternity, the creation of inferior beings, and the attributes of the Supreme. And we wonder that, if it were only to enjoy the sensation of being overwhelmed in sublime mystery, and of finding how much there is reserved to be learnt in a higher state of existence and intelligence, an inquisitive mind should not, when these subjects are forced on the view, make a strong, though it were a transient, effort of investigation. Nor can we conceive how a man of the least sagacity can deeply examine any moral subject, without often finding himself brought to the borders of metaphysical ground; and there perceiving very clearly that he must either enter on that ground, or leave his subject most partially and unsatisfactorily discussed. All subjects have first principles, toward which an acute mind feels its investigation inevitably tending, and all first principles are, if investigated to their extreme refinement, metaphysical. The tendency of thought toward the ascertaining of these first

principles in every inquiry, as contrasted with a disposition to pass (though perhaps very elegantly or rhetorically) over the surface of a subject, is one of the strongest points of distinction between a vigorous intellect and a feeble one.

It is true enough, to the grief of philosophers, and the humiliation of human ability, that but a very small degree of direct success has ever crowned these profound researches, or perhaps will ever crown them in the present state of our existence. It is also true, that an acute man who will absolutely prosecute the metaphysic of every subject to the last possible extreme, with a kind of rebellion against the very laws and limits of nature, in contempt of his senses, of experience, of the universal perceptions of mankind, and of divine revelation, may reason himself into a vacuity where he will feel as if he were sinking out of the creation. Hume was such an example; but we might cite Locke and Reid, and some other illustrious men, who have terminated their long sweep of abstract thinking, as much in the spirit of sound sense and rational belief as they began.

Yet while we must attribute to weakness or ignorance the contempt or the terror of these inquiries, it is so evident from the nature of things, and the whole history of philosophy, that they must in a great measure fail, when extended beyond certain contracted limits, that it is less for the portion of direct metaphysical science which they can ascertain, than for their general effect on the thinking powers, that we deem them a valuable part of intellectual discipline. Studies of this nature tend very much to augment the power of discriminating clearly between different subjects, and ascertaining their analogies, dependencies, relative importance, and best method of investigation. They enable the mind to dissipate the delusion of first appearances, and detect fallacious subtleties of argument. Between the most superficial view of a subject, and its most abstracted principles, there is a gradation of principles still more and more abstracted, conducting progressively, if any mind were strong enough to follow, to that profoundest principle where inquiry must terminate for ever: now, though it be impossible to approach within the most distant glimmering sight of that principle, yet a mind sharpened by metaphysical investigation, will be able

sometimes to penetrate to the second, third, or fourth place in this retiring gradation, and will therefore have a far more competent understanding of the subject, from being able to investigate it to this depth, than another mind which has been accustomed to content itself with an attention merely to the superficies. A man habituated to this deeper examination of every subject which he seriously thinks, will often be able, and entitled, to advance his propositions with a confidence to which the man that only thinks on the surface of a subject must be a stranger, unless indeed he can totally forget that there *is* anything deeper than the surface; but then he may very fairly be excused from making any propositions at all.

On the whole, we are of opinion, that though it is most unwise to dedicate the chief part of a studious life to metaphysical speculation, except in the case of those few extraordinary minds which can carry this speculation so far as to render to mankind the service of practically ascertaining the limits which human ability cannot pass, a moderate portion of this study would be of the greatest use to all intellectual men, as a mode of acquiring, in the general exercise of their understandings, at once the double advantage of comprehensiveness and precision.

While, therefore, we are doing honour to abstract science, for the superior talents which it requires in the investigator, for the augmented powers which it confers in the progress of study, and for the elevating dignity which it bestows in the successful result, we are willing to remember, that after all it is but of subordinate importance. And we cannot help admiring the wisdom of that arrangement, by which nothing that is truly essential to the well-being of man is denied to the exertion of such powers as man generally possesses. The truths connected with piety and the social duties, with the means of personal happiness, and the method of securing an ulterior condition of progressive perfection and felicity, lie at the very surface of moral inquiries; like the fruits and precious stores of the vegetable kingdom, they are necessary to supply inevitable wants, and are placed by Divine Benevolence, within the reach of the meanest individual. The secret treasures, however, of the moral, as of the physical world, lie deep and remote

from casual observation, and are only yielded up to a series of skilful and laborious efforts: they are indeed wonderful and splendid; they may gratify the ambition of the curious and ostentatious, and they may denote the gradations of mental nobility; they may even be applied to more useful purposes; but they afford no substantial enjoyments, they constitute no part of the necessities or comforts of existence; a man who wants them, may yet be happy, contented, and secure; and he who possesses them in profusion, may glitter in the array of intellectual opulence, yet pine, and perish.

About the middle of his life Lord Kames became acquainted with David Hume, who was considerably younger than himself, and who was just then making a manful attempt for fame, and against religion, in the publication of his "Treatise of Human Nature." His letters, describing the views and feelings which possessed his mind at that time, and which he seems to have retained with little alteration through life, exhibit but a very mean moral picture of the man. The printing of his "Philosophical Essays," which Lord Kames dissuaded, gave occasion for his lordship's full appearance before the public as a philosopher, in his "Essays on the Principles of Morality and Natural Religion," in which he set himself to oppose the opinions of Hume.

The intelligent reader will be anxious to meet with this book; for he is given to expect that the author makes out a fine account of human nature, as a well-poised, well regulated, and most harmonious moral system. He must be curious to see in what manner he disposes of the stupendous depravity, which through all ages has covered the earth with crimes and miseries: and how he has illustrated the grand and happy effects resulting from the general and permanent predominance of the selfish over the benevolent affections, from the imbecility of reason and conscience as opposed to appetite, from the infinitely greater facility of forming and retaining bad habits than good ones, from the incalculable number of false opinions embraced instead of the true, and from the depravation which is always found to steal very soon into the best institutions. He must, surely, be no less solicitous to see the dignity and certainty of

the moral sense verified in the face of the well-known fact, that there is no crime which has not, in the absence of revelation, been committed; in one part of the world or another, without the smallest consciousness of guilt.

It is too evident that our philosopher felt it a light matter, that his speculations were sometimes in opposition to the book which Christians deem of paramount authority. He would pretend, in a general way, a kind of deference for that book, and yet go on with his theories and reasonings all the same. In this we consider his conduct, and the conduct of many other philosophic men, as most absurd, setting aside its irreligion. The book which avows itself, by a thousand solemn and explicit declarations, to be a communication from heaven, is either what it thus declares itself to be, or a most monstrous imposture. If these philosophers hold it to be an imposture, and therefore an execrable deception put on the sense of mankind, how contemptible it is to see them practising their civil cringe, and uttering phrases of deference.* If they admit it to be what it avows itself, how detestable is their conduct in advancing positions and theories, with a cool disregard of the highest authority, confronting and contradicting them all the while. And if the question is deemed to be yet in suspense, how ridiculous it is to be thus building up speculations and systems, pending a cause which may require their demolition the instant it is decided. Who would not despise or pity a man eagerly raising a fine house on a piece of ground at the very time in doubtful litigation? Who would not have laughed at a man, who should have published a book of geography, with minute descriptions, and costly maps, of distant regions and islands, at the very time that Magellan or Cook was absent on purpose to determine their position, or even verify their existence? If Lord Kames was doubtful on the question of the truth or imposture of the most celebrated book in the world, a question of which the decision, the one way or the other, is the indispensable preliminary to so many speculations, why did he not bend his utmost strength to decide it? This had been a work of far more importance than any of those to which he applied himself; of far more importance than his reasonings on the existence of a Deity, since the very object of these reasonings

was to prove that we have a natural, intuitive, and invincible assurance that there is a God, and therefore, in fact, that we need no reasoning or writing on the subject. Or, if he would not make an effort towards the decision of this great question himself, why would he not lie quiet, till the other examiners should decide it; cautious, even to anxiety, not to hazard, in the meanwhile, a single position of such a nature as must *assume* that the question was already decided, and decided against the pretensions of the book professing to be of divine authority? But such positions he made no difficulty of advancing, especially in what was called, at that time, his *magnum opus*, the "Sketches of the History of Man."

The leading doctrine of this work appears to be that man was originally in the state of a most ignorant savage, and that all his knowledge and improvements subsequently attained, as well in morals and theology as in arts and sciences, have resulted from the progressive development of his natural powers by natural means: in this same work, notwithstanding, the author affected to pay some deference to the Mosaic history. This idle and irreligious notion was retained and cherished in spite of the able reasoning of Dr. Doig, of which Lord Woodhouselee gives a lucid abstract, followed by a curious account of the commencement of the acquaintance between Dr. Doig and Lord Kames.

The other distinguished literary performance of Lord Kames, was the "Elements of Criticism." The biographer introduces his remarks on this work by a very curious inquiry into the history of philosophical criticism, the invention of which he attributes to the Scottish philosopher, after an acute examination of the claims of both the ancients and moderns. We are very much entertained by this ingenious investigation; though Lord Woodhouselee's own acknowledgment of the near approaches to this species of criticism in one or two of the ancients, and the actual, though very imperfect development of it in several modern writers, especially Akenside, warrants our hesitation to assign to Lord Kames the title of inventor, which is wrested, by a rather nice distinction, from Aristotle. In the "Treatise of Rhetoric," Aristotle gave an elaborate analysis of the passions, and of the sources of pain and pleasure, expressly with a view to instruct writers and

speakers how to interest those passions. If this was not actually deducing, it was making it easy for the persons so instructed to deduce, from the very constitution of the human mind, the essential laws of good writing and eloquent speaking. It was showing that excellence in these arts must consist in the adaptation of all their performances to the principles of human nature. By thus illustrating the manner in which the human mind can be subjected to the powers of eloquence, Aristotle laid at least the foundation of philosophical criticism. It is true that this could not so strictly be called criticism till it should be carried a little further, till a number of precise inferences from this explication of the passions should be propounded, as laws of criticism, and these laws be formally applied to the productions of genius. But this was nearly a matter of course when the first great work of elucidating the passions was accomplished; when the nature of the materials was ascertained, it dictated at once the mode of operating on them. By a very slight change of form, each proposition relative to the passions might have been made a critical rule, applicable to its respective part of the works to be addressed to them. This had been a very slender effort for the great philosopher if he had chosen to pursue his subject so far; and therefore it does not claim any very high degree of fame, if a modern has done what he omitted. We allow however to Lord Kames "the merit of having given to philosophical criticism the form of a science, by reducing it to general principles, methodizing its doctrines and supporting them everywhere by the most copious and beautiful illustrations."

ON BLAIR'S LIFE AND WRITINGS:

An Account of the Life and Writings of Hugh Blair, D.D., F.R.S.E., one of the Ministers of the High Church, and Professor of Rhetoric and Belles Lettres in the University of Edinburgh. By the late JOHN HILL, LL.D., F.R.S.E., Professor of Humanity in the University. 8vo. 1807.

There appears to be some cause for apprehension, lest the extravagant admiration once lavished on Dr. Blair should

decline, by degrees, into a neglect that will withhold even common justice. No productions so celebrated at first, as his sermons, have perhaps ever come in so short a time to be so nearly forgotten. Even before the conclusion of the series, the public enthusiasm and avidity had begun to languish, and the last volume seemed only announced in order to attend the funeral of its predecessors. The once delighted readers excused the change of their taste by pretending, and perhaps believing, that a great disparity was observable between the two prior volumes and those which followed them. The alleged inferiority might possibly exist in a certain degree; but the altered feeling was in a much greater degree owing to the recovery of sober sense, from the temporary inebriation of novelty and fashion; and the recovery was accompanied by a measure of that mortification, which seeks to be consoled by prompting a man to revenge himself on what has betrayed him into the folly.

As a critical writer, however, Dr. Blair has suffered much less from the lapse of years. His lectures have found their place and established their character among a highly respectable rank of books, and will always be esteemed valuable as an exercise of correct taste, and an accumulation of good sense, on the various branches of the art of speaking and writing. It was not absolutely necessary they should bear the marks of genius, it was not indispensable that they should be richly ornamented; but yet we can by no means agree with this biographer, that ornament would have been out of place, and that the dry style which prevails throughout the lectures is the perfection of excellence in writings on criticism. It has been often enough repeated, that such a bare thin style is the proper one for scientific disquisitions, of which the object is pure truth, and the instrument pure intellect: but, in general criticism, so much is to be done through the intervention of taste and imagination, that these faculties have a very great right to receive some tribute, of their own proper kind, from a writer who wishes to establish himself in their peculiar province. And the writings of Dryden, Addison, and Johnson, will amply show what graces may be imparted to critical subjects by a fine imagination, without in the least preventing or perplexing the due exercise of the reader's understanding. We are not so absurd

as to reproach Dr. Blair for not having a fine imagination, but we must censure his panegyrist for attempting to turn this want into a merit. Philosophical criticism, indeed, like that of Lord Kames and Dr. Campbell, which attempts to discover the abstract principles, rather than to illustrate the specific rules, of excellence in the fine arts,—and between the object of which, and of Dr. Blair's criticism, there is nearly the same difference as between the office of an anatomist who dissects, or a chemist who decomposes beautiful forms, and an artist who looks at and delineates them—may do well to adhere to a plainer language; but the biographer has judiciously withdrawn all claims, in behalf of Dr. Blair, to the character of a philosophical critic. He has acknowledged and even exposed the slightness of the professor's observations on the formation of language. He has not, however, said one word of the irreligious inconsistency and folly of professing a zealous adherence to revelation, and at the same time, labouring to deduce the very existence of language, in a very slow progress, from inarticulate noises, the grand original element of speech, as it seems, among the primæval gentlefolk, at the time when they went on all-four, and grubbed up roots, and picked up acorns. Our readers will remember the happy ridicule of a part of this theory, in one of Cowper's letters, in which he humorously teaches one of these clever savages to make the sentence, "Oh, give me apple."* They may find the system ably and argumentatively exploded in Rousseau's "Discourse on the Inequality of Mankind." While this part of the lectures is given up to deserved neglect, we think the work will, on the whole, always maintain its character, as a comprehensive body of sensible criticism, and of very valuable directions in the art of writing. We agree with this biographer, in admiring especially the lectures on the subject of style.

But it is rather on the unrivalled excellence of the sermons that Dr. Hill seems inclined to found the assurance of Dr. Blair's celebrity in future times. In order to persuade ourselves into the same opinion, we have been reading some of the most noted of those performances. And they possess some obvious merits of which no reader can be insensible.

* To the Rev. W. Unwin, April 5, 1784. (Vol. v, p. 22. Southey's 1st Edit.)

The first is, perhaps, that they are not too long. It is not impertinent to specify the first, because we can put it to the consciences of our readers, whether, in opening a volume of sermons, their first point of inspection relative to any one which they are inclined to choose for its text or title, is not to ascertain the length? The next recommendation of the doctor's sermons, is a very suitable, though scarcely ever striking, introduction, which leads directly to the business, and opens into a very plain and lucid distribution of the subject. Another is a correct and perspicuous language; and it is to be added, that the ideas are almost always strictly pertinent to the subject. This, however, forms but a very small part of the applause, which was bestowed on these sermons during the transient day of their fame. They were then considered by many as examples of true eloquence; a distinction never perhaps attributed, in any other instance, to performances marked by such palpable deficiencies and faults.

In the first place, with respect to the language, though the selection of words is proper enough, the arrangement of them in the sentence is often in the utmost degree stiff and artificial. It is hardly possible to depart further from any resemblance to what is called a living, or spoken style, which is the proper diction at all events for popular addresses, if not for all the departments of prose composition. Instead of the thought throwing itself into words, by a free, instantaneous, and almost unconscious action, and passing off in that easy form, it is pretty apparent there was a good deal of handiwork employed in getting ready proper cases and trusses, of various but carefully measured lengths and figures, to put the thoughts into, as they came out, in very slow succession, each of them cooled and stiffened to numbness in waiting so long to be dressed. Take, for example, such sentences as these: "Great has been the corruption of the world in every age. Sufficient ground there is for the complaints made by serious observers, at all times, of abounding iniquity and folly." "For rarely, or never, is old age contemned, unless when, by vice or folly, it renders itself contemptible." "Vain, nay often dangerous, were youthful enterprises, if not conducted by aged prudence." "If, dead to these calls, you already languish in slothful inaction," &c.

"Smiling very often is the aspect, and smooth are the words of those who inwardly are the most ready to think evil of others." "Exempt, on the one hand, from the dark jealousy of a suspicious mind, it is no less removed, on the other, from that easy credulity which," &c. "Formidable, I admit, this may justly render it to them who have no inward fund," &c. "Though such employments of fancy come not under the same description with those which are plainly criminal, yet wholly unblamable they seldom are." "With less external majesty it was attended, but is, on that account, the more wonderful, that under an appearance so simple, such great events were covered."

There is also a perpetual recurrence of a form of the sentence, which might be occasionally graceful, or tolerable, when very sparingly adopted, but is extremely displeasing when it comes often; we mean that construction in which the quality or condition of the agent or subject, is expressed first, and the agent or subject is put to bring up the latter clause. For instance: "Pampered by continual indulgence, all our passions will become mutinous and headstrong." "Practised in the ways of men, they are apt to be suspicious of design and fraud," &c. "Injured or oppressed by the world, he looks up to a Judge who will vindicate his cause."

In the second place, there is no texture in the composition. The sentences appear often like a series of little independent propositions, each satisfied with its own distinct meaning, and capable of being placed in a different part of the train, without injury to any mutual connexion, or ultimate purpose, of the thoughts. The ideas relate to the subject generally, without specifically relating to one another. They all, if we may so speak, gravitate to one centre, but have no mutual attraction among themselves. The mind must often dismiss *entirely* the idea in one sentence, in order to proceed to that in the next; instead of feeling that the second, though distinct, yet necessarily retains the first still in mind, and partly derives its force from it; and that they both contribute, in connexion with several more sentences, to form a grand complex scheme of thought, each of them producing a far greater effect, as a part of the combination, than it would have done as a little thought standing alone. The consequence of this defect is, that the

emphasis of the sentiment and the crisis or conclusion of the argument comes nowhere; since it cannot be in any single insulated thought, and there is not mutual dependence and co-operation enough to produce any combined result. Nothing is proved, nothing is enforced, nothing is taught, by a mere accumulation of self-evident propositions, most of which are necessarily trite, and some of which, when they are so many, must be trivial. With a few exceptions, this appears to us to be the character of these sermons. The sermon, perhaps, most deserving to be excepted, is that "On the Importance of Religious Knowledge to Mankind," which exhibits a respectable degree of concatenation of thought, and deduction of argument. It would seem as if Dr. Blair had been a little aware of this defect, as there is an occasional appearance of remedial contrivance; he has sometimes inserted the logical signs *for* and *since*, when the connexion or dependence is really so very slight or unimportant that they might nearly as well be left out.

If, in the next place, we were to remark on the figures introduced in the course of these sermons, we presume we should have every reader's concurrence that they are, for the most part, singularly trite; so much so, that the volumes might be taken, more properly than any other modern book that we know, as comprising the whole common-places of imagery. A considerable portion of the produce of imagination was deemed an indispensable ingredient of eloquence, and the quota was therefore to be had in any way and of any kind. But the guilt of plagiarism was effectually avoided, by taking a portion of what society had long agreed to consider as made common and free to all. When occasionally there occurs a simile or metaphor of the writer's own production, it is adjusted with an artificial nicety, bearing a little resemblance to the labour and finish we sometimes see bestowed on the tricking out of an only child. It should, at the same time, be allowed, that the consistency of the figures, whether common or unusual, is in general accurately preserved. The reader will be taught, however, not to reckon on this as a certainty. We have just opened on the following sentence: "Death is the gate which, at the same time that it *closes* on this world, *opens* into eternity." (Sermon on Death.) We cannot comprehend the construc-

tion and movement of such a gate, unless it is like that which we sometimes see in place of a stile, playing loose in a space between two posts; and we can hardly think so humble an object could be in the author's mind, while thinking of the passage to another world.

With respect to the general power of thinking displayed in these sermons, we apprehend that discerning readers are coming fast towards an uniformity of opinion. They will all cheerfully agree that the author carries good sense along with him, wherever he goes; that he keeps his subjects distinct; that he never wanders from the one in hand; that he presents concisely very many important lessons of sound morality; and that in doing this he displays an uncommon knowledge of the more obvious qualities of human nature. He is never trifling nor fantastic; every page is sober, and pertinent to the subject; and resolute labour has prevented him from ever falling in a mortifying degree below the level of his best style of performance. He is seldom below a respectable mediocrity, but, we are forced to admit, that he very rarely rises above it. After reading five or six sermons we become assured, that we most perfectly see the whole compass and reach of his powers, and that, if there were twenty volumes, we might read on through the whole, without ever coming to a bold conception, or a profound investigation, or a burst of genuine enthusiasm. There is not in the train of thought a succession of eminences and depressions, rising towards sublimity, and descending into familiarity. There are no peculiarly striking short passages where the mind wishes to stop awhile, to indulge its delight, if it were not irresistibly carried forward by the rapidity of the thought. There are none of those happy reflections back on a thought just departing, which seem to give it a second and a stronger significance, in addition to that which it had most obviously presented. Though the mind does not proceed with any eagerness to what is to come, it is seldom inclined to revert to what is gone by; and any contrivance in the composition to tempt it to look back with lingering partiality to the receding ideas, is forborne by the writer,—quite judiciously, for the temptation would fail.

A reflective reader will perceive his mind fixed in a wonderful sameness of feeling throughout a whole volume: it is

hardly relieved a moment, by surprise, delight, or labour; and at length becomes very tiresome; perhaps a little analogous to the sensations of a Hindoo while fulfilling his vow, to remain in one certain posture for a month. A sedate formality of manner is invariably kept up through a thousand pages, without the smallest danger of ever luxuriating into a beautiful irregularity. We never find ourselves in the midst of any thing that reminds us of nature, except by that orderly stiffness which she forswears, or of freedom, except by being compelled to go in the measured paces of a dull procession. If we manfully persist in reading on, we at length feel a torpor invading our faculties, we become apprehensive that some wizard is about turning us into stones, and we can break the spell only by shutting the book. Having shut the book we feel that we have acquired no definable addition to our ideas; we have little more than the consciousness of having passed along through a very regular series of sentences and unexceptionable propositions; much in the same manner as perhaps, at another hour of the same day, we have the consciousness or remembrance of having just passed along by a very regular painted pallisade, no one bar of which particularly fixed our attention, and the whole of which we shall soon forget that we have ever seen.

The last fault that we shall allege, is some defect on the ground of religion; not a deficiency of general seriousness, nor an infrequency of reference to the most solemn subjects, nor an omission of stating sometimes, in explicit terms, the leading principles of the theory of the Christian redemption. But we repeatedly find cause to complain that, in other parts of the sermon, he appears to forget these statements, and advances propositions which, unless the reader shall combine with them modifications which the author has not suggested, must contradict the principles. On occasions, he clearly deduces from the death and atonement of *Christ*, the hopes of futurity, and consolations against the fear of death; and then, at other times, he seems most cautious to avoid this grand topic, when adverting to the approach of death, and the feelings of that season; and seems to rest all the consolations on the review of a virtuous life. We have sometimes to charge him also with a certain adulteration of the Christian moral principles, by the admixture of a portion

of the wordly spirit. As a friend to Christianity, he wished her to be a little less harsh and peculiar than in her earlier days, and to show that she had not lived so long in the genteel world in the creation, without learning politeness. Especially it was necessary for her to exercise due complaisance when she attended *him*, if she felt any concern about his reputation, as a companion of the fashionable, the sceptical, the learned, and the affluent, and a preacher to the most splendid congregation in the whole country. It would seem that she meekly took these delicate hints, and adopted a language which no gentleman could be ashamed to repeat, or offended to hear. The sermons abound with specimens of this improved dialect, but we cannot be supposed to have room here for quotations; we will only transcribe a single short sentence from the Sermon on Death: "Wherever religion, virtue, or true honour call him forth to danger, life ought to be hazarded without fear." (Vol. ii. p. 224.) Now what is the meaning of the word "honour," evidently here employed to denote something distinct from virtue, and therefore not cognizable by the laws of morality? Does the reverend orator mean, that to gain fame or glory, as it is called, or to avert the imputation or suspicion of cowardice, or to maintain some trivial punctilio of precedence or arrogant demand of pride, commonly called a point of honour, between individuals or nations, or to abet, as a matter of course, any cause rendered honourable by being adopted by the higher classes of mankind,—a Christian ought to hazard his life? Taken as the ground of the most awful duty to which a human being can be called, and yet thus distinguished from religion and morality, what the term means can be nothing good. The preacher did not, perhaps, exactly know what he intended it to mean; but it was a term in high vogue, and therefore well adapted to be put along with religion and virtue to qualify their uncouthness. It was no mean proof of address to have made these two surly puritans accept their sparkish companion. If this passage were one among only a few specimens of a dubious language, it would be scandalous in us to quote it in this particular manner; but as there are very many phrases cast after a similar model, we have a right to cite it, as an instance of that tincture of the un-

sound maxims of the world, which we have asserted to be often perceptible in these sermons. This might be all in its place in the sermons of the despicable Yorick; but it is disgusting to hear a very grave divine blending, with Christian exhortations, the loathsome slang of duelling lieutenants, of gamblers, of scoffers at religion, of consequential fools who believe their own reputation the most important thing on earth, and indeed that the earth has nothing else to attend to, and of men whose rant about perhaps the glory of dying for their country, is mixed with insults to the Almighty, and imprecations of perdition on their souls.

This doubtful and accommodating quality was one of the chief causes, we apprehend, of the first extraordinary popularity of these sermons. A great many people of gaiety, rank, and fashion, have occasionally a feeling that a little easy quantity of religion would be a good thing; because it is too true, after all, that we cannot be staying in this world always, and when one goes out of it, why, there may be some hardish matters to settle in the other place. The prayer-book of a Sunday is a good deal to be sure toward making all safe, but then it is really so tiresome; for penance it is very well, but to say one likes it, one cannot for the life of one. If there were some tolerable religious thing that one could read now and then without trouble, and think it about half as pleasant as a game of cards, it would be comfortable. One should not be so frightened about what we must all come to some time.—Now nothing could have been more to the purpose than these sermons; they were welcomed as the very thing. They were unquestionably about religion, and grave enough in all conscience; yet they were elegant; they were so easy to comprehend throughout, that the mind was never detained a moment to think; they were undefiled by Methodism; they but little obtruded peculiar doctrinal notions; they applied very much to high life, and the author was evidently a gentleman; the book could be discussed as a matter of taste, and its being seen in the parlour excited no surmise that any one in the house had been lately converted. Above all, it was most perfectly free from that disagreeable and mischievous property attributed to the eloquence of Pericles, that it “left stings behind.”

With these recommendations, aided by the author's repu-

tation as an elegant critic, and by his acquaintance with persons of the highest note, the book became fashionable; it was circulated that Lord Mansfield had read some of the sermons to their Majesties; peers and peeresses without number were cited, as having read and admired; till at last it was almost a mark of vulgarity not to have read them, and many a lie was told to escape this imputation, by persons who had not yet enjoyed the advantage. Grave elderly ministers of much severer religious views than Dr. Blair, were, in sincere benevolence, glad that a work had appeared, which gave a chance for religion to make itself heard among the dissipated and the great, to whom ordinary sermons, and less polished treatises of piety, could never find access. Dainty young sprigs of theology, together with divers hopeful young men and maidens, were rejoiced to find that Christian truth could be attired in a much nicer garb than that in which it was exhibited in Beveridge, or in the Morning Exercises at Cripplegate.

If the huzzahs attending the triumphal entry of these sermons had not been quite so loud, the present silence concerning them might not have appeared quite so profound. And if there had been a little more vigour in the thought, and any thing like nature and ease in the language, they might have emerged again into a respectable and permanent share of public esteem. But as the case stands, we think they are gone or going irrevocably to the vault of the Capulets. Such a deficiency of ratiocination, combined with such a total want of original conception, is in any book incompatible with its staying long in the land of the living. And, as to the style, also, of these performances, there were not wanting, even in the hey-day and riot of their popularity, some doctors, cunning in such matters, who thought the dead monotony of the expression symptomatic of a disease that must end fatally.

We should apologize to our readers for having gone on thus far with our remarks, without coming to the work which has given the occasion for introducing them.

This volume has disappointed our expectation of finding a particular account of the Life of Dr. Blair, enlivened with anecdotes illustrative of his character. Nearly half of it is occupied not in criticizing, but actually in epitomizing, the Doctor's writings, a labour of which it is impossible to com-

prehend the necessity or use, except to make up a handsome-looking volume. Several of the most noted of the sermons are individually dissected, in a tedious manner, and compared with several of the sermons on the same subjects, in the volumes of some of the celebrated French preachers, but without any critical remarks of consequence. The other half of the book does relate mainly to the man himself, but is written much more in the manner of a formal academical eulogy, than of any thing like a lively and simple memoir. It is not florid, but it is as set and artificial as the composition of Dr. Blair himself; and indeed seems a very good imitation, or, at least, resemblance. Except in the acknowledgment of one or two slight weaknesses, as we are taught to deem them, in the Doctor's character, it is a piece of laboured and unvaried panegyric, carried on from page to page, with a gravity which becomes at length perfectly ludicrous. Hardly one circumstance is told in the language of simple narrative; every sentence is set to the task of applause. Even Dr. Blair himself, whose vanity was extreme, would have been almost satisfied, if such an exhibition of his qualities and talents had been written in time to have been placed in his view.

To avoid several pages of extracts, we must remark, that Dr. Blair was something of a beau, and very fond of novel-reading. Every reader will be surprised and provoked to find so very small a share of personal history. It is well known that we are not in general to look for many incidents and adventures in the life of a scholar and clergyman; but we should have supposed that a period of eighty-three years might have furnished more matters of fact than what could be comprised in a quarter of that number of pages. Those which are here afforded, consist of little beside the notice and dates of the two or three more obscure preferments of Dr. Blair, on his road to what is described the summit of ecclesiastical success and honour, the High Church of Edinburgh; his appointment as Professor of Belles Lettres; his failure of being placed in the situation of Principal of the University of Edinburgh, which he expected to receive from the pure gratitude and admiration of his country, without any solicitation; and, the important circumstance of preaching his last sermon. This circumstance will be henceforward inserted,

we trust, with its precise date, in all chronicles of the memorable things of past times; for it is enlarged on here, as if it had been one of the most momentous events of the century. He died December 27th, 1800, in the eighty-third year of his age, and the fifty-ninth of his ministry.

The Doctor's successful progress through life was on the whole adapted to gratify, one should think almost to satiety, that love of fame which his biographer declares, in so many words, to have been his ruling passion; nor had the passion which, Dr. Hill does *not* say, was second in command, the love of money, any great cause to complain.

We sincerely wish to persuade ourselves that, with all his labour of encomium, this Dr. Hill has done less than justice to his subject. For if we are to take his representation as accurate and complete, we have the melancholy spectacle of a preacher of religion, whose grand and uniform object in all his labours was advancement in the world. This is clearly the only view in which his admiring friend contemplates those labours. The preacher's *success* is constantly dwelt on with delight; but this success always refers to himself, and his own worldly interests, not to any religious influence exerted on the minds of his inferior, and afterwards, his splendid, auditories. His evangelical office is regarded as merely a professional thing, in which it was his happiness to surpass his competitors, to attain the highest reputation, to be placed in a conspicuous station, to obtain a comparative affluence, to be most sumptuously flattered by the great, and to be the intimate friend of Hume, Smith, Home, Ferguson, and Robertson. There is hardly a word that attributes to the admired preacher any concern about promoting the Christian cause, the kingdom of Christ, or the conversion of wicked men,—in short, any one of those sublime objects for which *alone* the first magnanimous promulgators of Christianity preached, and laboured, and suffered. It is easy to see that, though Dr. Blair's reputed eloquence had been made the means of imparting the light, and sanctity, and felicity, of religion, to ten thousand poor wicked peasants, yet if he had not sought and acquired high distinction in polished society, his learned biographer would have been utterly disinclined to celebrate him, as deeming him either a grovelling spirit, incapable of aiming at a high object, or the victim of malignant stars that

forbade him to attain it. We could make plenty of citations to acquit ourselves of injustice in this representation; there are many passages of a quality similar to the following:—

“His Lordship (Chief Baron Orde) in his official capacity, was a regular hearer of the Doctor’s sermons, while his court sat, and there was no one better qualified to judge of the preacher’s merit. This merit, too, was never more conspicuous than when it was honoured with the approbation of the venerable Judge. Dr. Blair’s literary reputation was there thoroughly established. And the unwearied labour he underwent in his closet, while composing his sermons, was repaid by the admiration of a discerning audience.”—p. 187.

The Doctor is commonly reputed to have had a tolerably sufficient attachment to pelf. He might have higher motives for clinging so fast to the patronage of Lord Melville, but it is irksome to hear of his being “so much indebted to that patron’s munificence,” with the addition of the fulsome cant that, “every favour which he received (from this patron) was *multa dantis cum laude*, and did honour to the hand that bestowed it.” This patron is presumed to have been at the bottom of the pension of 200*l.* granted from the public treasury.

In reading so many things about patronage, and munificence, and protection, and advancement, and success, it cannot fail to occur to any reader of sense to ask, with a sentiment very indignant in one reference, or very compassionate in the other—If all this was necessary to Dr. Blair, with a very small family, and with all the internal means attributed to him of advancing his interests, what is to become of ever so many hundred hapless clergymen, in Scotland and elsewhere, who have large families, slender livings, and no General Frazers, Chief Barons, and Lord Melvilles to “protect” them, no means of getting into the High Church of Edinburgh, no chance of attracting the notice of Royalty, and a pension of £200, and no hope of collecting tribute by means of a literary reputation “extending beyond the bounds of the British empire?”

ON DAVID HUME.

Account of the Life and Writings of David Hume, Esq. By THOMAS EDWARD RITCHIE. 8vo. 1808.

THIS is by no means so ample a memoir as the number of pages would seem to indicate. The last eighty pages are occupied with Hume's publication in French, relative to the affair with Rousseau; a translation of this pamphlet is inserted in the narrative, accompanied by several additional letters on the same business, and engrossing more than a hundred pages; and about one hundred and thirty pages are filled with criticism on Hume's writings, eight pages that were printed in the first edition of his "Essays," but in the later ones omitted by the author, and a critique on Wilkie's "Epigoniad," sent by Hume to the "Critical Review." Much less than half the book, therefore, is occupied with what is strictly biographical, even if we include a considerable number of his letters to some of his distinguished friends, especially Dr. Robertson. In so much of the volume as we owe to the pen of Mr. Ritchie, we do not find occasion for any great measure of either praise or blame. It is written with perspicuity; in a style not clumsy, but not remarkable for elegance. The detail of the few events of Hume's life would be sufficiently orderly, if there appeared less eagerness to seize and dilate every circumstance that can be introduced as an episode. A character of sense and independence is visible throughout; and the present is one of the very few biographers who are free from the weakness of enthusiastically admiring, or the hypocrisy of affecting so to admire, the mixed and imperfect subject of their pages. If he could have brought himself to the obsequiousness of promising to laud his subject up to the pitch of eulogy which would have gratified the delicate ears of Hume's living relations, he might have been enabled to supply a great deficiency of information respecting the early years and habits of the philosopher; but we are compelled to approve the independent conduct described in the note at page 4.

"In the hope of being enabled to fill up any chasm in this narrative, I applied to a near relation of Mr. Hume, and was

told, that if the work was to advance his fame, and a copy of the manuscript furnished to the family, the information wanted would, perhaps, be supplied. With such conditions I refused compliance, choosing rather to remain satisfied with the little I had otherwise obtained, than to fetter my sentiments, and subject myself to so laborious a task, in return for what was probably of little importance."

In the narrative part, great use is necessarily made of Hume's own memoir, called "My Own Life," with the addition of Dr. Smith's details of the circumstances which preceded the exit. This is followed by a general estimate of Hume, as a metaphysician, a moralist, a writer on general policy, and a historian. It is a brief review of all his writings, and evinces a good share of acuteness and knowledge. The last eighteen pages of this review are filled with a curious collection of sentences from the "History of England," as they stand corrected in the later editions, compared with the same sentences of the first edition, which are placed in an opposite column, with here and there a suggestion from Mr. Ritchie of still further corrections, wanted in some of these sentences. It would not seem that Mr. Hume's composition can pretend to high merit on the ground of correctness.

It is not the biographer's fault that Hume's life furnished but a singularly meagre and uninteresting detail. It is curious to think how many thousands of his contemporaries whose names are forgotten, would have supplied each a far more animated and entertaining narrative. The story of many a common soldier or sailor, many a highwayman, many a gipsy, many a deserted child, and many a beggar, would have kept awake the attention which is much inclined to slumber over an account of this celebrated philosopher.—He was born at Edinburgh in 1711. There was some undefined quantity of nobility in the blood of his ancestors on both sides, and therefore we suppose in his own, of which he is said to have been always extremely vain. We are told, "the juvenile years of Hume were not marked by anything which can attract our notice. His father died while our historian was an infant, and left the care of him, his elder brother Joseph, and sister Catharine, to their mother, who, although in the bloom of life, devoted herself to the educa-

tion of her children with laudable assiduity." He went to school and to college, was designed by his friends for the law, but was often guilty of slyly stealing from the lectures of his venerable tutors, Voet and Vinnius, into the much more dashing company of Cicero and Virgil. These gentlemen had certainly taken care to make their own fortunes, in their day; but their harangues and hexameters were of so little service to that of their admirer, which had no broader basis than the patrimony of a Scottish younger brother, that he determined to enter on some commercial pursuit. He therefore left the citizens of Rome, and went to try his skill among those of Bristol; but finding himself after a few months, totally unequal to the bustle incident to a mercantile situation, he abandoned the attempt, and went to France. Thence he returned to London in 1737, and, in the following year, published his "Treatise of Human Nature."

Under the profession of showing what qualifications are requisite for the satisfactory performance of such a work as this pretends to be, Mr. Ritchie has given a sketch of the history of philosophy, or rather a catalogue of philosophers, from Plato to Hume. But we do not exactly comprehend the design of this, unless he means to be understood, that to be able to indite a philosophical treatise on human nature, the writer must have studied all that has ever been written, by all the philosophers of ancient and modern times. We could certainly wish that Hume had deemed this an indispensable pre-requisite to the privilege of writing and vending his own sceptical cogitations; but it is too evident that none of the infidel philosophers have ever had the conscience to acknowledge the obligation of this preliminary duty. This enumeration of distinguished names ends with a real curiosity, a list of about a sixth part, as the author believes, of "the commentators and scholiasts on Aristotle's philosophical works," which accumulates the titles of books containing, in all, a quantity of writing which would have amounted to several hundred quarto volumes.

It is well known, from Hume's own acknowledgment, that this his first performance was utterly neglected by the public. In making the acknowledgment, he praises the equanimity which he maintained on the occasion, and the facility with which his cheerful and sanguine temper

returned to the habit of animation and hope. Mr. Ritchie has in his text consented to say the same thing, but has subjoined a note which gives another representation of the philosopher's patience and tranquillity.

"In the 'London Review,' vol. v. p. 200 (anno 1777), edited by Dr. Kenrick, there is a note on this passage in our author's biographical narrative, rather inimical to the amenity of disposition claimed by him. The reviewer says,—'So sanguine, that it does not appear our author had acquired, at this period of his life, that command over his passions of which he afterwards makes his boast. His disappointment at the public reception of his "Essay on Human Nature," had indeed a violent effect on his passions in a particular instance: it not having dropped so *dead-born* from the press, but that it was severely handled by the reviewers of those times, in a publication entitled, *The Works of the Learned*; a circumstance which so highly provoked our young philosopher, that he flew in a violent rage to demand satisfaction of Jacob Robinson, the publisher, whom he kept, during the paroxysm of his anger at his sword's point, trembling behind the counter, lest a period should be put to the life of a sober critic by a raving philosopher."

The repugnance of mankind to receive instruction should not deter an enlightened and benevolent man who may have failed in the first effort, from soliciting their attention again, and holding up salutary truths afresh to their view. Mr. Hume displayed in a high degree this generous perseverance. Having endeavoured to explain to an ungrateful and indocile nation, that there is a wonderful difference between impressions and ideas; that there is no such connexion between causes and effects, as to support any argument in defence of religion or for the being of a God; that no man can admit the truth of the Christian religion but by a miracle taking place in his mind at every moment; that the Deity, if there be any such being, is just so great as his actual visible works indicate, and no greater; together with various other precious and pious doctrines; it had been a desertion of the great cause of truth and utility to have let these discoveries sink in silence, merely because the public had paid but little attention to them on their first or second promulgation. They might be received again with the same indifference; but whether men would bear or whether they would forbear, the philosopher was

resolved the truth should be testified to them once more. After a few years, the substance of the "Treatise on Human Nature" was new-modelled and republished, with greater maturity of reasoning, in his "Inquiry concerning Human Understanding," and his "Inquiry concerning the Principles of Morals." These works, however, experienced the same neglect as the first. The grief of the disinterested reformer of the judgments and morals of men may well be imagined to have been extreme, at this repeated proof of their perverseness and hardness of heart; a grief so purely benevolent, that it could be but imperfectly consoled by the reflection, that he had at least performed his own part, and acquitted himself of all the guilt. In regard to such a case, one is anxious to believe, if one could, that really virtue is its own reward. If it be not so, there could be few spectacles more pitiable than that of a philosophical philanthropist, like Mr. Hume, toiling without any success as to the immediate object, and without any hope of a life after death to reward him amidst a happy rest from his labours. His generous distress was not, however, doomed to be altogether without mitigation. About the same period of his life at which the two "Inquiries" ineffectually tried to obtain attention, he published some of his "Essays," which, finding a more favourable reception, relieved in some measure the forlornness of his literary prospects, and gave a fresh stimulus to that indefatigable application to study, which even his disappointments had scarcely been sufficient to relax.

There are various expressions in this and other parts of the volume, pretty plainly indicating Mr. Ritchie's own dispositions towards religion. His condemnation of these proceedings against infidelity does not appear to arise in any degree, from a concern for the cause of religion, which he might think this an injudicious and injurious mode of defending, but from a contempt of the zeal which could think it worth while to take any interest about religion at all, or in any way to make a strenuous effort in its defence. Nor is it apparently his anxiety for the endangered liberty of the press, that prompts the indignation, but really a friendly sympathy with the cause of Deism, and with Hume considered in the character of its advocate and apostle, to

whose writings possibly the biographer feels indebted and grateful for some part of his freedom from prejudice and superstition.

But, while we cannot entertain the smallest respect for the motive of our author's censure of these proceedings, we disapprove, as much as he can do, the exertion of temporal force, whether in an ecclesiastical or purely secular form, or any proceedings tending to this exertion, against the propagators of erroneous speculations. We disapprove it for the obvious reasons which have been repeated innumerable times.

1. The exertion of force for the suppression or punishment of error, proceeds on a principle which is itself the most impious of all errors; it assumes the infallibility of the power that makes it.

2. Though the power, whether an individual or a corporation of persons, exercising such authority, *were an* infallible judge of truth, there can be no proof derived from the Christian institutes, that the Governor of the world has invested the temporal authority with any right of interference or punishment, one step beyond the offences which immediately violate the good order of the body politic. But the most absolute proof from this source is required, since nothing can be more dangerous and wicked, than to hazard an encroachment on the peculiar and exclusive province of the divine jurisdiction.

3. As this exercise of power is not authorized by Christianity, so neither can it be justified by any practical experience of its being adapted to produce its intended effect. The experience of ages testifies its inefficacy. The reaction of the human mind, against what has been felt as persecution, has commonly produced a more obstinate adherence to the obnoxious opinions, which have thenceforth been propagated with more daring zeal, or with more sedulous cunning, so that their extermination could be effected only by exterminating their believers.

4. If this power is to be exercised at all, there are no definable limits to its exercise, since there can be no indisputable rules for deciding what error is too small, or what punishment is too great. It will be impossible to ascertain the proportions of turpitude and pernicious

tendency in the various forms and degrees of error; and among the adherents to any given system of opinions, there will not be wanting some who can foresee the most dreadful consequences necessarily resulting from the rejection of even the minutest of its articles, and who, therefore, if invested with power, and unrestrained by policy, would enact fines, imprisonment, exile, or death, against the slightest deviation from the appointed creed.

5. If we could even admit the possibility of such an exercise of human power being just in the abstract, it is impossible to find or imagine any man, or corporation of men, so sublimely virtuous as to exercise it with an exclusive disinterested regard to its object. In all cases that ever yet occurred, worldly advantage, or the spirit of party, or some other mean principle, has mingled in those proceedings of temporal power, against heretics and unbelievers, which have been professedly dictated by a pure love of truth.

Lastly. It seems no less than a virtual rejection of religion, to admit that its evidence is not such as to support it, without the assistance of a provision to inflict temporal pains and penalties on its adversaries and deserters.

In these observations we have used the word *temporal power*, notwithstanding that the proceedings meditated against Hume were of an ecclesiastical nature. It is scarcely necessary to observe, that wherever the church is formally supported as a corporate body by the authority, and as the constituent part of the state, it has the power of the state in all its institutions and proceedings, and can either inflict punishment by a process of its own, or consign the offender over to the civil magistrate. If the excommunication which would have followed the success of the proposed measure against Hume and Kames, had amounted to no more than purely an ecclesiastical anathema, the expression merely of the *opinion* of the clerical body, they would have laughed at the church and all its assemblies and debates; but as the case stood, they both felt no little anxiety; for, as Mr. Ritchie observes, "when their adversaries were armed with a sentence of excommunication, they had it in their power to institute a criminal process in the ordinary courts of justice. Similar measures of severity had not unfrequently

been resorted to in England, where Woolston had not only been exalted to the pillory, but bore on his person manifest evidence of the humane and tolerant spirit of a national clergy," (p. 70). All men of liberal minds rejoice that these methods of refuting and restraining infidelity have long since become obsolete. For some years past our government and clergy have had the wisdom to consign the question, in all its parts, to the pure jurisdiction of reason; and the writings of our Christian advocates have shown how safely the sacred cause may be left without any other aid, except the influence of heaven. Reviewing the actions of past ages, we may exult in it as a grand attainment of the human mind, and a noble distinction of the present times; that men are become persuaded religion possesses within itself the means of its triumph, and is of too lofty a spirit to accept any obligations from magistrates, pillories, and prisons.

These discussions in the ecclesiastical courts somewhat contributed to bring into notice the portion of the "History of England" which Hume published about this time. For a number of years, however, the sale was slow, and the slender share of reputation most mortifying to his ruling passion. With the exception of two or three tracts, he had not even the consolation of exciting literary hostility, which would have been beyond all comparison more gratifying to him than this silent and inglorious toleration. He pretends indeed, in his memoir of his own life, that some parts of the history did excite a violent clamour; but this story seems to have been of the same accuracy as that of the redoubtable Falstaff, when he swore he had been set upon by some fifty ruffians at least; for the biographer, "after a diligent search into the literary histories of that period, has been unable to discover any of that outcry which assailed the sensitive ears of Mr. Hume. In later times, indeed, his accuracy, impartiality, and political tenets have been attacked, and with justice, but without any clamour, and seldom with illiberality," (p. 106.)

Many pages are occupied with a history of the successive literary societies in Scotland, the Rankenian Club, the Poker Club, the Select Society, the Philosophical Society, and the Royal Society of Edinburgh, of several of which Hume was

a member, together with the most eminent of his contemporaries. It is justly asserted that these associations greatly contributed, beside their effect on the individuals composing them, to promote in Scotland a literary taste, a refinement of composition, and a bold and comprehensive speculation.

A kind of amicable rivalry in historical composition, confirmed the habits of intimate communication between Hume and Robertson; the greater number of the letters of Hume which are published, or rather re-published in this volume, (for many of them have been printed before), are addressed to his brother-historian. Both these and his other letters are in general excellent specimens of an easy diction, unaffected good sense, politeness, and sometimes delicate pleasantry.

Hume enjoyed the high advantage over his accomplished friend of residing at several times a number of years in France and Italy, as well as of spending considerable portions of time in the English metropolis. From this citizenship of the world he necessarily acquired a considerable degree of freedom from local prejudices, tastes, and dialect, an ampler collection of facts for an inductive estimate of human nature, and a richer store of images, supplied by so many views of nature and art, for giving life, colour, and variety, to the pictures and narrations of history. And yet it is almost wonderful that, in point of fact, he so little after all excelled in these respects his untravelled rival. If it be admitted that Hume has the advantage in shrewdness of minute discrimination, yet we believe it is felt by sensible readers that Robertson is quite as much a master of general principles, that he gives a still greater prominence to important facts, and that, in the art of infusing into the scenes a moral interest which shall command the passions, he far surpasses his frigid contemporary; in short, that history under the management of Robertson is less a *scene of the dead* than under that of Hume. The style also of the former is almost as exempt from nationality of phrase as that of the latter.

In quality of secretary to the British ambassador, Hume visited Vienna and Turin, and about the age of fifty was employed as *chargé d'affaires* at Paris. It was at this time that he became involved in the well-known affair with

Rousseau, which has more of the character of an adventure than any other circumstance of his life, and of which the story and documents, in French and English, fill almost half the present volume. Our philosopher invited Rousseau to take refuge in England, from the danger which threatened him in France on account of his "Emilius," which had given offence to the ecclesiastical order. Rousseau availed himself of the invitation; and Hume really appears to have taken extraordinary pains, with extraordinary patience, to place him in an agreeable situation, which was at last effected in Derbyshire. For a short time the expressions of gratitude and admiration were raised to a style of fulsome excess. But very soon the morbid mind of Rousseau began to conceive dark suspicions that his pretended benefactor was only a wicked and traitorous agent of that grand conspiracy, which it was now most evident that all mankind had taken the trouble to enter into, against his peace, his fame, and even his personal safety. The circumstances which excited the suspicion, and soon confirmed it into an invincible persuasion, were more trivial than even those from which dramatists have represented the commencement and progress of mistaken jealousy. A more amusing exhibition was perhaps never made, of the servility of a strong understanding to a wretched temperament, than that afforded by a number of letters of Rousseau, and especially by one of great length, describing the whole progress of his feelings, and replete with virulence, eloquence, and perverse ingenuity. The reader at this time may be entertained by the quarrel without caring which of them was in the wrong, though his censure will inevitably fall on the citizen of Geneva. The dispute was well worth perusing for the sake of the contrast between the men; for the world will probably never see again such an instance of the two extremes of the philosophic character brought in contact. We could amuse ourselves by compounding in imagination these two elements in equal proportions, or with various degrees of the predominance of either. It may be worth while for any one who proposes to set up for a philosopher to do this, in order to find the standard to which it may be prudent to conform himself. About an equal mixture of them would make a man whom all would be constrained to

admire; but no mixture would constitute one whom a good man could approve or revere. Even if the history of the world did not supply a far nobler class of human beings, to be placed in contrast with such as the persons in question, or as any imaginable combination of the two characters, it would still be evident that men most religiously devoted to the pursuit of fame, that is, idolatry of self, devoid of any pure, unmingled wish to do good, and neglectful or contemptuous of the authority of the Supreme Spirit, are creatures of a very degraded order, mere *terre filii*, notwithstanding the sagacity which can illustrate the records of time or unfold the nature of man, notwithstanding the originality which can invent new systems, or the eloquence which can adorn them.

The account of the closing part of Hume's life has long been very well known to the public; but we are inclined to print it once more, as exhibiting what would probably be admitted, and even cited by infidels, as an example of the noblest and most magnanimous deportment in the prospect of death, that it is possible for any of their class to maintain; an example indeed which very few of them ever in their serious moments dare promise themselves to equal, though they may, like Mr. Ritchie, deem it in the highest degree enviable. It may be taken as quite their apostolic specimen, standing parallel in their history to the instance of St. Paul in the records of the Christians, "I have fought a good fight," &c. Mr. Hume had visited Bath, but was returning to Scotland under an increase of his fatal malady. At this period, however,

"His cheerfulness never forsook him. He wrote letters to his literary friends, informing them of his intention to be at Edinburgh on a certain day, and inviting them to dine with him on the day following. It was a kind of farewell dinner; and among those who came to partake of the hospitality of the dying historian were Lord Elibank, Dr. Smith, Dr. Blair, Dr. Black, Professor Fergusson, and John Home.

"At his return to Edinburgh, Mr. Hume, though extremely debilitated by disease, went abroad at times in a sedan chair, and called on his friends; but his ghastly looks intimated the rapid approach of death. He diverted himself with correcting his works for a new edition, with reading books of amusement, with the conversation of his friends and sometimes in the even-

ing with a party at his favourite game of whist. His facetiousness led him to indulge occasionally in the bagatelle. Among other verbal legacies, in making which he amused himself, the following whimsical one has been related. The author of 'Douglas,' is said to have had a mortal aversion to port wine, and to have had frequent disputes with the historian about the manner of spelling his name. Both these circumstances were often the subject of Mr. Hume's raillery; and he verbally bequeathed to the poet a quantity of port wine, on condition that he should always drink a bottle at a sitting, and give a receipt for it under the signature of John Hume.

"Dr. Smith has recorded an instance of Mr. Hume's sportive disposition; and it also shows the placidity of his mind, notwithstanding the prospect of speedy dissolution. Colonel Edmonstone came to take leave of him; and on his way home he could not forbear writing Hume a letter, bidding him once more an eternal adieu, and applying to him the French verses in which the Abbé Chaulieu, in expectation of his own death, laments his approaching separation from his friend the Marquis de la Fare. Dr. Smith happened to enter the room while Mr. Hume was reading the letter; and in the course of the conversation it gave rise to, Mr. Hume expressed the satisfaction he had in leaving his friends, and his brother's family in particular, in prosperous circumstances. This, he said, he felt so sensibly, that when he was reading a few days before Lucian's 'Dialogues of the Dead,' he could not, among all the excuses which are alleged to Charon for not entering readily into his boat, find one that fitted him. He had no house to finish; he had no daughter to provide for; he had no enemies upon whom he wished to revenge himself. 'I could not well imagine,' said he, 'what excuse I could make to Charon in order to obtain a little delay. I have done everything of consequence which I ever meant to do. I could at no time expect to leave my relations and friends in a better situation than that in which I am now likely to leave them: I therefore have all reason to die contented.'

"'He then diverted himself,' continues Dr. Smith, 'with inventing several jocular excuses which he supposed he might make to Charon, and in imagining the very surly answers which it might suit the character of Charon to return to them.' 'Upon further consideration,' said he, 'I thought I might say to him, Good Charon, I have been correcting my works for a new edition. Allow me a little time that I may see how the public receive the alterations. But Charon would answer, When you see the effect of these, you will be for making other alterations. There will be no end of such excuses; so, honest friend, please step into the boat. But I might still urge, Have a little patience,

good Charon : I have been endeavouring to open the eyes of the public. If I live a few years longer, I may have the satisfaction of seeing the downfall of some of the prevailing systems of superstition. But Charon would then lose all temper and decency : You loitering rogue, that will not happen these many hundred years. Do you fancy I will grant you a lease for so long a term ? Get into the boat this instant, you lazy, loitering rogue.

"The hour of his departure had now arrived. His decline being gradual, he was in his last moments perfectly sensible, and free from pain. He showed not the slightest indication of impatience or fretfulness, but conversed with the people around him in a tone of mildness and affection ; and his whole conduct evinced a happy composure of mind. On Sunday, the 25th of August, 1776, about four o'clock in the afternoon, this great and amiable man expired."—Pp. 298—301.

On this most remarkable exhibition we think there was room for the biographer to have made several observations ; as,

First, supposing a certainty of the final cessation of conscious existence at death, this indifference to life, if it was not affected (which indeed we suspect it to have been in part) was an absurd undervaluation of a possession which almost all rational creatures, that have not been extremely miserable, have held most dear, and which is in its own nature most precious. To be a conscious agent, exerting a rich combination of wonderful faculties, to feel an infinite variety of pleasurable sensations and emotions, to contemplate all nature, to extend an intellectual presence to indefinite ages of the past and future, to possess a perennial spring of ideas, to run infinite lengths of inquiry, with the delight of exercise and fleetness, even when not with the satisfaction of full attainment, and to be a lord over inanimate matter, compelling it to an action and a use altogether foreign to its nature,—to be all this, is a state so stupendously different from that of being simply a piece of clay, that to be quite easy and complacent in the immediate prospect of passing from the one to the other, is a total inversion of all reasonable estimates of things ; it is a renunciation, we do not say of sound philosophy, but of common sense. The certainty that the loss will not be felt after it has taken place, will but little soothe a man of

unperverted mind in considering what it is that he is going to lose.

Second, the jocularity of the philosopher was contrary to good *taste*. Supposing that the expected loss were *not*, according to a grand law of nature, a cause for melancholy and desperation, but that the contentment were rational; yet the approaching transformation was at all events to be regarded as a very grave and very strange event, and therefore jocularity was totally incongruous with the anticipation of such an event: a grave and solemn feeling was the only one that could be in unison with the contemplation of such a change. There was, in this instance, the same incongruity which we should impute to a writer who should mingle buffoonery in a solemn crisis of the drama, or with the most momentous event of a history. To be in harmony with his situation, in his own view of that situation, the expressions of the dying philosopher were required to be dignified; and if they were in any degree vivacious, the vivacity ought to have been rendered graceful by being accompanied with the noblest effort of the intellect of which the efforts were going to cease for ever. The low vivacity of which we have been reading, seems but like the quickening corruption of a mind whose faculty of perception is putrifying and dissolving even before the body. It is true that good men, of a high order, have been known to utter pleasantries in their last hours. But these have been pleasantries of a fine ethereal quality, the scintillations of animated hope, the high pulsations of mental health, the involuntary movements of a spirit feeling itself free even in the grasp of death, the natural springs and boundings of faculties on the point of obtaining a still much greater and a boundless liberty. These had no resemblance to the low and laboured jokes of our philosopher; jokes so laboured as to give strong cause for suspicion, after all, that they were of the same nature, and for the same purpose, as the expedient of a boy on passing through some gloomy place in the night, who whistles to lessen his fear, or to persuade his companion that he does not feel it.

Third, such a manner of meeting death was inconsistent with the scepticism to which Hume was always found to avow his adherence. For that scepticism necessarily ac-

knowledge a possibility and a chance that the religion which he had scorned, might, notwithstanding, be found true, and might, in the moment after his death, glare upon him with all its terrors. But how dreadful to a reflecting mind would have been the smallest chance of meeting such a vision! Yet the philosopher could be cracking his heavy jokes, and Dr. Smith could be much diverted at the sport.

Fourth, to a man who solemnly believes the truth of revelation, and therefore the threatenings of divine vengeance against the despisers of it, this scene will present as mournful a spectacle as perhaps the sun ever shone upon. We have beheld a man of great talents and invincible perseverance, entering on his career with the profession of an impartial inquiry after truth, met at every stage and step by the evidences and expostulations of religion and the claims of his Creator, but devoting his labours to the pursuit of fame and the promotion of impiety, at length acquiring and accomplishing, as he declared himself, all he had intended and desired, and descending toward the close of life amidst tranquillity, widely-extending reputation, and the homage of the great and the learned. We behold him appointed soon to appear before that Judge to whom he had never alluded but with malice or contempt; yet preserving to appearance an entire self-complacency, idly jesting about his approaching dissolution, and mingling with the insane sport his references to the fall of "superstition," a term of which the meaning is hardly ever dubious when expressed by such men. We behold him at last carried off, and we seem to hear, the following moment, from the darkness in which he vanishes, the shriek of surprise and terror, and the overpowering accents of the messenger of vengeance. On the whole globe there probably was not acting, at the time, so mournful a tragedy as that of which the friends of Hume were the spectators, without being aware that it was any tragedy at all.

If that barbarous old Charon *would* have permitted a century or two more of life, it is probable that Hume would have been severely mortified in viewing the effect of his writings against "superstition," an effect so much less than his vanity no doubt secretly anticipated. Indeed, his strictly philosophical works seem likely to fall into utter

neglect. The biographer justly observes, that, though very acute, they are not very lucid or systematic in point of reasoning; and they have none of that eloquence, which sometimes continues to interest the general reader in works that are becoming superannuated in the schools of philosophy. Many of his shorter essays will always be read with much advantage; but his History, we need not say, is the basis of his permanent reputation; and it will perpetuate the moral, as well as the intellectual cast of his mind; it will show a man indifferent to the welfare of mankind, contemptuous of the sublime feelings of moral and religious heroism, incapable himself of all grand and affecting sentiments, and constantly cherishing a consummate arrogance, though often under the semblance and language of philosophic moderation.

HINDOO IDOLATRY AND CHRISTIANITY.

A Vindication of the Hindoos from the Aspersions of the Rev. Claudius Buchanan, M. A.; with a Refutation of the Arguments exhibited in his Memoir, on the Expediency of an Ecclesiastical Establishment for British India, and the ultimate Civilization of the Natives, by their Conversion to Christianity. Also, Remarks on an Address from the Missionaries in Bengal, to the Natives of India, condemning their Errors, and inviting them to become Christians. The whole tending to evince the Excellence of the Moral System of the Hindoos, and the Danger of interfering with their Customs or Religion. By a BENGAL OFFICER. 8vo. 1808.

NOTWITHSTANDING the laudable pains taken, by some of the pious people of these times, to engage our respect at least, if not to effect our conversion, to the "religion" of the Brahmins, we cannot profess to have entirely overcome all the difficulties of admitting the doctrine of transmigration. Till very lately, we had no doubts whatever on the subject: we could most conscientiously have declared a total disbelief

of that doctrine; but it is the privilege or misfortune of candid minds, to be in every stage of their intellectual course susceptible of the impression of every new argument, so that you shall find them, in February, veering toward the belief of what they had deemed utterly absurd in the December preceding. In time, however, they learn to be a little cautious of instantly avowing each new direction of their opinions: we, therefore, do not wish to be just now called upon to express ourselves decidedly, as to our views of this grand tenet of Indian faith: we shall only say that the sole argument which has gone far to change our former views of the subject, arises from the appearance of such an author as the one now before us. For it would seem rather difficult to believe, that such a piece of entity should have originated in this country of England, to which, notwithstanding, we are to refer, as far as appears, the commencement of his *present* stage of mundane existence: he does not perhaps distinctly say this, but it is impossible for us to assign such a nativity to the sister island, because we are all apprized of the valuable privilege conferred on that soil by St. Patrick, of never having cause to regret the want of ichneumons. And our partiality for England, though the country produces, we know, many things for which it is never the better, would really make it desirable to hope, that the moral agent before us received its being and acquired its properties in some distant country and age, though it does not say whether it has any dim traces of recollection of having, early in the *Kali joog*, infested the precincts of some idol's temple in the East, and tasted under the infernal altar the blood of a human sacrifice. The surmise of an origin not very recent, is suggested by the appearance of something more virulent and inveterate in the quality of the being, than could have grown from inhabiting any small number of malignant substances and forms. Whether this may not have been an instance of a sacrilegious sinner doomed to "pass," according to the Institutes of Menu, (p. 352), "a thousand times into the bodies of spiders, of snakes, or mischievous toad-sucking demons," it is not for us to pretend to determine. It is also difficult to guess how the last transit was suffered to go into the veritable or apparent shape of a man, if that improvement of condition was in any possible connexion

with amendment of quality. But yet, on consideration, this may perhaps be partly explained, for as there is in the creature one good quality, this *may* become in the place of a bad one: this good property is honesty, as opposed to hypocrisy.

The several preceding remonstrants against the measures for imparting Christian instruction to the Hindoos, while in effect presenting themselves as the abettors of paganism, with all its abominations, were disposed notwithstanding to keep up a certain language of pretended respect for Christianity. Their hypocrisy was indeed clumsily managed, just in proportion to their ignorance of the nature of the sacred cause which was to be mocked by it, but believing no doubt that all the friends of that cause were little better than fools, they thought it might be easy to gull them without much dexterity of phrase, and they imagined, we suppose, some possible advantage to themselves in so doing. While earnestly plotting, therefore, a mortal sacrifice of Christianity so far as it is any thing more than a local superstition, to be allowed where it always prevails, they adopted a proceeding which was but a very awkward imitation of the smooth treachery of that most miserable man who is "gone to his own place," a place however not likely to be so lonely as some divines have imagined. But this Bengal Officer justly despises all such shallow and useless policy: and comes forward in the honest avowed character of a soldier of Herod or Pilate, whose rude heathenism laughs at the uncouth grimaces of pretended holiness with which the less courageous conspirators are proceeding to their purpose. *He* does not cant, in feeble and stupid hyperbole of falsehood, to Mr. Twining's tune of "surrendering life rather than the Christian religion." *He* makes none of Major Scott Waring's clumsy pretences of respect for the Holy Scriptures, and "our good old church," or of believing the "truths of our religion," and hoping no one will attribute his reviling of missionaries, and his anger at the "new manna of conversion," "to indifference to the eternal welfare of the natives of India." He is content, and perhaps even proud, to provoke the abhorrence of the public by his impious audacity, and, in much consistency with the bravery of his character, looks undivided to his coadjutors the satisfaction of being rewarded

with its contempt for their hypocrisy. We can easily suppose he would address them in some such terms as these: "Where is the use of your pretending what you know, or might know, that not a mortal will believe? Even if any body *would* believe your sham palaver of liking the church, the bible, and all that, what good would it be? Is one always to be putting on a set of pretended notions, and adjusting them like a parson his pulpit clothes at a vestry looking-glass, before one is to venture out into the world? If one cannot do what one pleases and say what one thinks, but must be canting a parcel of stuff, just because bishops and priests are paid to cant it, it were better to shoot oneself without more ado. I am for a man of spirit showing that he does not care for all the priests and methodists on earth. What the plague should keep us from telling them that we are none of their dupes? You are not afraid, I suppose, of these Christians, and the person they call Christ? If you are, you have made a fine blunder in saying so much as you have already; I wish it may not be too late for you to get reconciled to mother-church; try the first opportunity by all means, I beg of you, and be prodigious penitent, and subscribe to the Bible Society. At any rate, do not go on making pretences of some kind of respect for Christianity, while every body may see that you are insulting and practically disclaiming it, and that you would caper with joy to see all the Bibles in the world piled up for a bonfire. For myself, they may call me infidel, or heathen, or atheist, if they please, but they shall never call me hypocrite or coward; and as to you, I should really think that while you are throwing away all other reputation, you might as well keep that of courage?"

We can easily conceive, that the accession of this hero will not give an unmingled satisfaction to the band. Though his views, his spirit, and his object, are but the same as theirs, his ingenuous boldness makes a more perfect disclosure, than they would probably have wished till some more favourable season. It is not indeed any very refined artifice of management that they could have comprehended, or therefore applauded; Mr. Twining's understanding, especially, might not have been able to distinguish the new ally from a Christian, had he written with any thing like the delicate

subtily and finesse of such an author as Hume. A tolerably broad style of expression was quite necessary to meet the perceptions of the junto; but still they could have recognized the marks of fraternity in our author, without his absolutely going the length of chanting psalms to the loathsome Doorga, and celebrating the sublime theology of that passage in the Institutes of Menu, which contains a clause relating to the EXCRETIONS of the divinity! Not that they might have had any objection to all this in itself, and in its proper place, that is in Bengal; but in England there is a certain remainder of the fashion of decency, which imposes the necessity of a small measure of policy; and therefore they would have been much more glad of his assistance, if he had not rushed so furiously forward in the *costume* of the gymnosophists, to beat the gong of the idol's temple, and summon the people to the mass of Seeva. Such as he is, however, the party must have him for an associate; in compassion they must have him, for he is fit for no other company; he has lost *caste* in the civilized society of Christendom; this irretrievable sacrifice made for the cause, is evidence of his merit, and will secure his fidelity. And though it would have been, in the party, an extremely moderate and humble petition, to have asked of the Indian gods to send them a co-operator much better versed in rules of art and discretion, and very much better capable of constructing sentences, than this unfortunate imp, yet we think they may make good service of him in a cause, in which they will not be able every day to find creatures of sufficient vice and stupidity to be employed. He is quite the Caliban for their drudgery, their curses, and their incantations; admirably fitted to fetch wood for baking their idols and burning their women; the genuine "hagseed," whose very dialect betrays the descent from Doorga or Sycorax. He is exactly for their purpose, if they want an organ through which they may eructate and disgorge the vilest slanders against blameless missionaries, profane every thing that is sacred, assert every thing that is false, and deify every thing that is abominable.

The chief part and object of the production before us, is the direct assertion, extended and illustrated to great length, of the excellence of the Hindoo "religion," which is represented as so firmly fixed in the minds of the people, that it

is madness to presume the possibility of displacing it by Christianity; and so adequate to all their spiritual and moral interests, that if Christianity *could* be substituted, it would be no advantage to them. Collateral topics are treated in a rambling way, several of them in a sort of attack on Dr. Buchanan. The subject of the missions is the essence of the business. Most of what he has to say directly on this subject, seems to have been set down previously to the appearance of Major Scott Waring's pamphlet, but is so perfectly in the same strain, that each might be taken as an echo of the other.

His flimsy observations relating to the missions, having been answered and exploded by anticipation, in the various publications that have been called forth by the two former writers, a very slight additional notice will suffice. It is needless to cite notorious facts, in contradiction of his assertion of the impracticability of converting the Hindoos. But it may be remarked here, and might have been remarked before, that these men let themselves talk, as if nothing were effected where prodigies are not effected, and as if a thing could never be done which cannot be done in an instant. What do they suppose the missionaries *expected* to effect, and in what time? Do they imagine that Mr. Carey, for instance, landed in India with the notion that all who came to worship the Ganges, or to burn their mothers, or expose their children on its banks, one season, were to come there the next to be baptized? Or that the want of moonlight the half of each month would be supplied by the light of Hindoo temples, set on fire over the heads of their gods by their recent worshippers all through Hindostan? The missionaries were painfully instructed, before, they went, in the obduracy of human nature; in the fatal resistance which truth has everywhere to expect from ignorance and prejudice, and a pure religion from desperate moral depravity. They had found too much of this, even in a country like England, to indulge for one moment the dream that they were to transform and illuminate crowds of miserable pagan barbarians, by just touching them with a testament or a tract. As they could not presume to promise themselves, for the present, that extraordinary exertion of divine power which their confidence in

prophetic declarations foresaw as the felicity of some future age, they formed their calculation nearly on the recorded and usual effect of human labours for the promotion of religion. They could not need to be told, in order to keep their imagination sober, that a handful of men commencing hostility, on such a calculation, against a most comprehensive and inveterate superstition, must expect so slow a success, that only their setting as high a value as ever benevolent apostle, or if possible as ever the still more benevolent angels of heaven did, on one pagan delivered from the abhorred den of idolatrous superstition, would console them on a numerical view of their acquisitions. Almost such a value they do set, in the slow progress of their success, on each individual; and therefore their animation is sustained, notwithstanding their cause does not obtain multitudes and princes, the only standard by which these officers and merchants are capable of estimating success.

If the missionaries really did go to India with hopes somewhat too elated, it was in a great measure from the fallacious accounts which a former set of infidel reporters had concurred in giving to Europe of the innocence, mildness, and civilization of the Hindoos; a fallacy which this Vindicator is silly enough to attempt imposing on the now better-informed public once more, and without the smallest aid of elegance, ingenuity, or learning. The missionaries knew they should find idols almost as plentiful as stumps of trees; and millions of unhappy mortals prostrate before them; they were prepared for this, but they had perhaps trusted these deceivers rather too far, to make, in its full extent, the infallible inference as to the moral depravity of the people; the consequence was, a feeling of no little surprise to find them almost all cheats, liars, and adulterers. However, they have had the courage to labour against both the idolatry and the moral depravity; they confide in the ultimate benignity of Heaven to the unhappy nations of the East; and this Bengal Officer may be assured, that they look on the yet little company of first converts with as much delight,—whether considering the intrinsic value of so many Christianized minds, or regarding them as the precursors of an infinite multitude to become the disciples and

agents of the Christian cause long perhaps after they shall have retired from their mission to their reward,—as he ever did, in the day of victory, on ten times as many of the same race of people lying dead on the field.

To attempt explaining to him the elevated religious nature of the motives by which they *are* actuated, would undoubtedly be much the same thing as to accost the faculties of the post aforesaid, or even those of Mr. Twining; but we may hope to make it intelligible to him by what motives they are *not* actuated, when we state, that these missionaries in a great measure, if not entirely, support themselves by their secular employments, which they undertook, in order that the contributions from England might be applied to the purposes of the mission in a stricter sense than that of supporting themselves and their families, and with a generous unanimous determination to devote to the same exclusive purpose whatever surplus might arise to any or all of them from such employments. This is the first calumniator that has made it necessary to say one word respecting the motives of the missionaries in India.

If it will please him better, we will impute it to malignity rather than to a hopeless eclipse of understanding, that in talking about interference and toleration, he, like the rest of the party, deprecates the use of the methods of mere persuasion, and represents their consequences in terms which identify them with methods of force.

Now, what is it exactly that these terms, justice, forbearance, indulgence, liberality, and toleration, are opposed to, in relation to our conduct toward the Hindoos? The new doctors of philanthropy take great pains to shift and complicate the answer to this question. They feel how strikingly rational it would look to answer directly and precisely, that the injustice, the injury, the restraint, the illiberality, the interference, and the intolerance, against which they so zealously remonstrate in behalf of the Hindoos, is actually neither more nor less than a permission, on the part of our government, to a number of Christian teachers, of exemplary virtue and literary acquirements, to visit the towns and villages, trusting their personal safety entirely to the inhabitants, while they inform them what their own Sastras say of their gods, to infer from these

testimonies that they cannot be right objects of worship, and to tell them of another Being, to them yet unknown, that exclusively claims their devotion. But *what then are* the interference and intolerance, which all this rhetoric of liberality is exerted to avert from those people? Has the government ever meditated any general sweeping measure against the privileges of their priesthood, against the rites of their temples, against the fantastic observances interwoven with their whole economy of life, or against the laws of their castes? The government never thought of any such thing. It has not even interfered with the female sacrifice, with their exhibitions of self-torture, nor with their regaling the sharks and crocodiles with the warm living bodies of their children, till the prohibitory regulation of Marquis Wellesley was called forth by accounts of the excess to which this festival of Hindoo charity was carried at Gonga Saugor. Is it *this* act of "interference" which has caused the alarm with which our priests of the crocodile have begun to preach, in such pious fervour, against injustice, illiberality, and intolerance? But if so, why do they not try to preserve some appearance of discrimination in fixing the criminal charge? Why are the missionaries brought into the question? It was not *their* fault that the Marquis had the presumption to perpetrate this crime against the adored demons of India. Let the Marquis bear his own guilt; let him even be impeached in the British Parliament for this act of rebellion against the Pandemonium, the ancient paramount government of Hindostan, under which he ought to have known his place and duty better, than to interfere with any of its sacred appointments; but let not the missionaries be brought in for any share of his guilt or punishment.

Or do these writers, in their deprecations of intolerance and interference, mean to refer to such proceedings as those forced changes in the military exterior which provoked the mutiny of Vellore? Why then do they not speak to the point; and, in protesting against the continuance or repetition of such measures, arraign the Madras government, or the commander of the army, or whatever higher power authorized the one or the other in the unfortunate experiment, for a most wanton and dangerous insult on their

soldiers. If they are too sneaking to do this, for fear perhaps of having on their hands a number of what are called affairs of honour, let them not spend their wrath on the harmless messengers of religion, who had no more to do in any way with that sanguinary business than we have while writing these remarks on their noble-spirited accusers. Assuredly, to fall foul of the caps, and whiskers, and red-streaked foreheads of sepoys, was the very last thing that would ever have come into the heads of the missionaries, even though they had been in the Christianizing company of the officers at Vellore; they would have been about very different work, and might have prosecuted it till the arrival of the tenth Avatar, before mutiny or massacre would have been the consequence. There would have been some reasonable quantity of difference, very perceptible to these barbarian soldiers, though it does not seem to be so to the English advocates of their superstition, between the orders and operators of personal violence, and two, or three, or ten missionaries, explaining the contents of the four gospels. And even supposing the extreme case, that the spirit of Moloch *had* entered into them, their victims would have been obvious, few, and unconnected with any others; those victims would have been ready, and there the sacrifice to the *dii inferi* would have ended. From how many deadly griefs, such a sacrifice, especially had it involved all the missionaries, might have saved our philanthropists!

If this author should say that his homilies against intolerance are chiefly intended against Dr. Buchanan's proposal for the government to abolish the Hindoo holidays, the excessive polygamy of the Koolin Brahmins, and the privileges of the monstrous swarm of mendicants, to restrain in a measure the female sacrifices, together with other abominations, and to curb the excesses of the 700,000 pilgrims to Jaggernaut; we would ask, once more, what all this has to do with the missionaries? These are suggestions for the solemn consideration of the government, which we are to presume does not like all these outrages of superstition on the good order of society; as but few of them are authorized by the sacred books of the Hindoos themselves, and the government has probably sufficient power to put them down in part without any hazard, we

think, notwithstanding this author, that Dr. Buchanan is right in recommending it to be done. But meanwhile, whether it is done or not, or whether it ought to be done or not, the missions will no more interfere with this whole concern, or with any part of it, than they will with the sowing of the rice-grounds. If they should happen to detain two or three dozen persons from the orgies of Jaggernaut, we suppose the 700,000 may possibly not be aware of this deficiency in their numbers, or will hardly think of taking their revenge by driving all the Europeans into the sea. It is not so much, forsooth, that *their* "religion" teaches them to care about one another; nor will the magazines of grain in the neighbourhood of the god be in the least want of additional consumers.

But, in truth, all these remarks levelled to the purpose of getting a precise answer to the inquiry, *what* it is exactly that the charge of interference and intolerance is to be fixed upon,—are very needless. The obnoxious suggestions held out by Dr. Buchanan, with their imaginary or exaggerated ill consequences, the Vellore mutiny, excursive episodes to the distance of Rosetta, Buenos Ayres, and even Mexico, in Messrs. Twining and Scott Waring, and in the article now before us retrospects so far back as the Crusades, St. Bartholomew, and the crimes of superstition recorded in our own "blood-stained annals," as they are justly called, whimsically jumbled with some ponderous buffoonery in misrepresentation of the proceedings and hazards of the Methodists itinerating among the Irish Catholics,—are all of most excellent use in varying and distending the reader's view to a vast compass of alarming vision, while there is still one precise point to which the effect of all this is meant to converge. To that one point the author frequently reverts, in order to preserve in the reader's mind the due bearing of all his exhibitions: but does not stop long there, lest he should lose the effect of his scattered topics of intimidation, and be reduced in the reader's view to the bare exclusive resources of impiety. The object is, by assembling a number of frightful histories, and enlarging on the possible mischief of this or that measure, which in fact has not the smallest connexion with the missionary system, and by taking care continually to associate these various repre-

sentations with references to the missions,—to make the missions take all the portentous colours of these associated shapes of evil, and stand forward to view as the embodied concentration of all real and imaginable perils. It is not military innovation, or the prevention of sacrificing children at Saugor, or the castigation of the gymnosophist Saniassis into a little decency and clothing, or the suppression or allowance of Hindoo holidays or polygamy, that these men really care about; it is precisely the attempt to introduce pure Christianity as contained in the New Testament, into India, that excites their anger; and it is this very attempt, made in a manner as peaceful and disconnected from all shadow or even possibility of force or constraint, as that in which any good thing ever attempted to enter any country,—that these men wish to brand with the names of illiberality, interference, and intolerance. The missionaries ask of the government just the permission, the mere permission and no more, to pursue their own undertaking, of course by the sole means of persuasion and Christian books; and this permission, if granted, is the intolerance to the Hindoos. It is intolerance to fifty millions of idolaters, that a few Christian instructors should be allowed to tell them that they are guilty and deluded beings, that there is a Redeemer of sinful mortals, that the true God has revealed himself, that idolatry is absurd and wicked, and that women should not be burnt, nor children exposed. It is intolerance to the pagans to suffer a single word to be said to them in condemnation of any thing which on the ground of their superstition they do wrong, or in contradiction of any thing they believe erroneously. It is intolerance to them and to their idols to suffer a few verses of the Bible to be read in the neighbourhood of one of their houses, even with their own consent, or a prayer to be made to the Almighty for their salvation, if it is where they can hear that prayer; so that, according to this latest improvement in the theory of civilization, to *tolerate* any mode of faith and worship is to *establish* it, and that too with all the rigour of popery in the dark ages, insomuch that it shall be a crime for any one of a different persuasion to attempt to make a proselyte from it, or even offer a written statement of his opinions, and the reasons and authority of them. A Hindoo, it seems, lives

under an intolerant government, unless that government shall give him a solemn pledge that no Christian shall ever insult him with the remark, that the ugly piece of wood he is worshipping cannot give him rain, or harvest, or health, or pardon of his guilt. This is verily a new notion of toleration and its opposite, and would help to place many celebrated characters in a new light. Nero and Diocletian had an enlarged liberality, to which no historian has had the sense to do justice. They went, to be sure, a little too far in favour of their heathen subjects, as they sometimes did even more than enjoin the total *silence* of the Christians; but they are amply excused for that slight excess by the consideration that they were themselves really of the pagan faith. Henry the Fourth committed an inexpressible outrage of intolerance against his popish subjects by the Edict of Nantes; and therefore Louis the Fourteenth showed himself the paragon of tolerant princes by revoking it. But even *his* merit might be eclipsed if there were a protestant king of a country chiefly inhabited by papists, and if he were to compliment their faith by a law of banishment against any one of his protestant subjects that should presume to attempt making a proselyte, or but offer a copy of a reformed catechism. If his present Majesty, as sovereign of the Indian provinces, should be induced to extend this latest improvement of toleration to his heathen subjects in that quarter, there will be other reforms to be adopted nearer home. It must be enacted in the way of toleration to the Irish catholics, that no protestant shall presume to pray or preach in their hearing, or offer them a tract against image-worship or transubstantiation. Now, in sober sadness, would not any thing like this be the last excess of impious absurdity? But what then would it be to make an enactment—not against the attempt to gain converts from a corrupted to the true mode of Christian faith, but against converting to that faith any of the miserable slaves of the vilest paganism! Let it be added that this toleration would be the very rivet of their slavery, though the word sounds, and is employed as meaning, something like liberty. In *this* manner, to tolerate those heathens is to deprive them by *force* of any means or chance of the benefit of ever becoming Christians; for the force which restrains the agent

of any good, is equally a force employed against the subject that might have received it.

As to the alarm, pretended by this writer, as well as the others, to have been excited in India by the missionaries, creating a necessity, on the ground of safety and true policy, of suppressing them, it is totally and incontestably false. They know perfectly well that if nothing is done to excite the fears or anger of the natives, but what is done by the missionaries, the English gentlemen may continue to sleep in their open bungalows, just as safely as they have done before; they may all, for any thing the Hindoos will do to prevent, live to make their fortunes, and come home to proclaim their irreligion.

Though we do not, however, believe a word of what is reiterated to hoarseness by these men, about the alarming effect of attempting to teach Christianity in Hindostan, we may be allowed to admire the felicity with which the point is argued in such a passage as the following:—

"It is likewise known, that the disaffection at Palamcottah, somewhat excited by recent alterations in dress, and other (apprehended) changes of Asiatic costume, was highly aggravated by an unhappy report in circulation,—that five hundred Europeans were on their way from Madras, for the purpose of enforcing the conversion to Christianity, of all the Mahomedans in the garrison. This single fact should satisfy Mr. Buchanan, of the impolicy and manifest danger of agitating religious questions among the natives of India."—P. 150.

The logic of it appears to stand thus: The troops were alarmed and enraged at the supposed approach of five hundred soldiers to drive them into Christianity, or Christianity into them, with their bayonets; the missionaries are no soldiers, have no bayonets, and are not a twentieth part of five hundred; therefore the troops must be alarmed and enraged at the attempts of the missionaries. Or if the passage would evasively be explained to mean, that the proceedings of the Christian reformers would be sure to give occasion for such false reports, and that such reports would always be sure to excite indignation and commotion,—it has not the smallest force. For if the troops to whom such reports have been carried, have uniformly found them to prove false, and that no such operators or implements of

conversion have been ever brought into their sight, they must be incomparably more stupid than their English friends will allow their race to be represented, if their indignation does not, at the second time, turn on the miscreants, whoever they may be, that attempt to alarm them by false information. If they have not thus much sense, the case is bad indeed; for it will always be easy for the native princes, or any discontented or malignant individual of lower rank, or for the emissaries of a hostile European power, to employ the vagabond Saniassis or Fakcers, and numberless other fit instruments of mischief, or even for any of this worthless tribe to employ themselves, in propagating reports in the native army that the government means to force them *vi et armis* out of their superstition; nor can this be at all prevented, by this writer's proposed "silencing for ever" of the missionaries. It will only be necessary to improve the falsehood, by saying that the silencing was a mere temporary trick of government—that the missionaries have been suffered to open again, and have received a whole ship's cargo of auxiliaries from England.

We might here remark that the Hindoos are, by this Vindicator, made exceedingly good or exceedingly bad, just as suits the immediate purpose. First, they *need* none of the moral improvements which Christianity would pretend to bring them; when he is maintaining this, there is not a good quality under heaven in which these people do not excel:—but next, it is *dangerous* to attempt the introduction of Christianity among them; when this is to be proved, *then* they are perfect devils of rage and revenge, prompt to every atrocity, and certain to repay the good wishes and kind efforts of their instructors with "extermination." The same may be said of his representations of the character of their "religion;" when it is to be proved such, that Christianity is unworthy to become its substitute, then it is sublime, beneficent, and of the best moral tendency; but when he is to show the dire hazards attendant on permitting a mission, then the spirit of this same religion is described in the following terms:—

"With despotic influence, and mounted on the pinnacle of superstition, it attracts within its vortex all the discordant atoms of civil feuds, and rival animosities; and stands, like the

genius of Punishment, 'with a black hue and a red eye,' menacing desolation;—or like the demon of Distrust, with dark, suspicious, and cautious step, it silently approaches the mansions of peace, with the contracted brow of sullen discontent; till urged by the congenial assimilation of universal dissatisfaction, like the fell tyrant of the forest, it springs, unsuspected, on the foe, and devotes him to destruction."—P. 155.

We should sooner have proceeded to what certainly forms the most prominent feature of this publication, the explicit assertion and illustration of the excellence of the Hindoo theology and morality, as placed in competition with Christianity, if we could really have attached any particular importance to such a phenomenon in literature. As appearing in print in England, such a thing may undoubtedly be called a phenomenon, even notwithstanding the gradation by which we have come to the show, through the respectable exhibitions of Messrs. Twining and Scott Waring: but we apprehend that such things are common enough in the coffee-houses, and at the mess, in Calcutta; and therefore any of our friends that may have been there, would be apt to divert themselves at our simplicity, if we continued long in the attitude of wonder. The singularity of the thing consists, in the heroic impudence of bringing such an importation from the camps and taverns of India, to be obtruded on the attention of people here, whose curiosity has been tolerably saturated by this writer's two predecessors. But we suspect that something depended on his performance or non-performance of this feat: the piece has a good deal the appearance which might be expected in a thing done for a wager, unwarily offered, in a convivial hour, by some good companion, who imagined that no man had effrontery enough to write such a pamphlet, and was also of opinion that this author had not faculties to make a pamphlet at all. On this latter account especially, it might have been thought the safest challenge possible; for it might be very well known that he could not read one line of the sacred books of the Hindoos, though he has passed so many years in their country; it might not be difficult to guess, what he somewhere acknowledges, that the slight smattering of Hindoo mythology in his possession, was bestowed on him by the illuminated wandering rabble of holy

beggars; and it would be tolerably evident, that his dialect, his ingenuity, and his logic, were—perfectly on a level indeed with the merits of the cause, but a small matter deficient for the task of its advocate. But his courage was up to the “sticking-place,” and as, according to the good homely adage, “where there is a will, there will be a way,” he had the good fortune to learn that a few books had been translated by Sir William Jones, Mr. Wilkins, and one or two more scholars. He eagerly possessed himself of the *Institutes of Menu*, the *Aycen Ackbary*, the *Heetopades*, and the *Geeta*; and went to work on this immense mass of learning, which he might get through in a fortnight, without refusing himself the entertainment of many a lounge at Christie’s, and many a saunter in the Park. It would seem as if his time had been fixed for him; or it might possibly have been from a sort of slashing soldierly impetuosity, that he goes directly to the cutting of large pieces out of *Menu*, and serves them up at his “repast,” as he pleasantly calls it, without the smallest dressing or garnish. It would generally have been supposed, that when Christianity was to be in effect exploded, and another religion declared the legitimate regent of the human mind throughout a vast empire, no little was to be done in the way of introduction and preparation, by an array of general principles, by deep historical research, by a statement of evidence on each cause respectively, and by a careful comparison of the principles and tendency of two immensely different systems. The renowned Mr. Thomas Taylor would take us through leagues and leagues of dissertation, historical, metaphysical, and mathematical, previously to introducing us to *his* pantheon, and putting the censer into our hands. But this was not to the taste, nor according to the habits of our mythological soldier; who, even in the operations of his martial profession, we dare surmise, was never detached by his commander from the downright point-blank business in which he could be of some service, to the execution of designs requiring skilful management, ingenuity, and combination, in which he could be of none. He begins his illustration of the excellence of the moral and religious system of the Hindoos, by just saying, that the missionaries scandalize their *Sastras*, as being filled with childish fables: and he then falls directly

on the grand substance of his undertaking, that of transcribing several dozen of pages from the *Sastras*, for he really knows no better than to suppose that the *Heetopades* and the *Geeta* are of that class of books! He pauses one moment, here and there, to ask whether *these* are mere fables for children, as the missionaries had profanely asserted; and at length concludes the achievement with this paragraph:—

“If the ‘*Sastras* of Barbarians!’ thus manifest an exalted idea of God; a comprehensive sense of moral duties; a belief in the immortality of the soul, and a future state of rewards and punishments;—what is it, then, that the missionaries propose teaching to the Hindoos?”—P. 44.

To this question, put at the end of an assortment of passages, selected carefully from the above-mentioned Indian books,—of which passages a considerable number convey positions which must, even in the selector’s own opinion, be absurd and false—no believer in Christianity, we suppose, will hold himself called upon to reply in behalf of that divine system. The man who, together with some good and some indifferent moral maxims, can select sentences about the study of the *Veda* being the highest means of felicity both in this world and the other, about the Divine Spirit being the whole assemblage of gods, about the composition of the body of that Divine Spirit, the solar and igneous light being his digestive heat and visual organs, water being his corporal fluid, the earth being the terrene parts of his fabric, his heart being the moon, the guardians of eight regions being his auditory nerves, his progressive motion being *Vishnu*, his muscular force *Hara*, his organs of speech *Agni*, his EXCRETION *Mitra*, his procreation *Brahma*: about the punishments of the wicked in *Asipatravana*, the sword-leaved forest, their being mangled by ravens and owls, swallowing cakes boiling hot, assuming the form of beasts, and suffering successive agonizing births; about the certain destruction which will fall on any family which a woman not duly honoured may choose to curse; about the tremendous guilt and punishment of tasting spirituous liquors, with grave information (for the benefit of distillers) of the several substances from which these liquors may be made; about the punishment of a false witness by being bound under

water with snaky cords by Varuna, the lord of the Ocean, during a hundred transmigrations,—the man who can bring an assemblage of such follies, and, by implication, the collective mass of mythological fooleries and preposterous morals, of filthy rites and *human sacrifices*, of which these selections are but an infinitesimal part, and set them in the face of Christianity as a triumphant challenge of comparison, is not a creature to be reasoned with by a Christian. He is an absolute Pariah of morality and sense; and it would be a profanation of Christianity to talk to him about it. That sacred system must not be invited by its friends to stoop for one moment to the ignominy of being compared with a superstition which combines every monstrosity which could result from priestcraft, poetry, and madness; it would be the same thing as to solicit an angel from heaven to come and stand in comparison with a Samiassi, or with a Bengal officer. In making a brief remark or two, we wish therefore to place Christianity as much as possible out of the question.

The leading remark is, that there is no talking rationally about religions and their respective properties and merits, without a reference to the grand question whether they are true or false; that is, whether as professing to be a divine communication, any given system brings evidence of that origin or does not. If a professed religion is destitute of this evidence, it is bad in its very radix: it is a wicked contrivance to impose, and assuredly for a bad purpose too, on the human mind; and this being the very basis of its character, it is idle and odious trifling to descant in its favour on a few things good in themselves, which it was impossible for even a system of falsehood to be framed without involving. The good maxims or sublime sentiments occasionally found in a pagan religion are but like the minor virtues, which it is possible an impostor or murderer may possess, if the system as a whole is essentially founded in fraud, and maintains its existence by deceiving the understandings of its believers. And this is the *demonstrable* character of all religions on earth but one*: that one brings with it a prodigious force of evidence that it is what it

* The Jewish is of course considered as included with the Christian religion.

professes to be, a direct communication from the Almighty; in other words, that it is authentic as a whole: there is therefore no longer any kind of competition or comparison between that one and any other systems assuming the name of religion. Set in contrast with them, it is not to be considered as differing from them in *degree*, but in the very essence of its institution. It comes authoritatively from the Omnipotent; they blaspheme him by falsely proclaiming that they do so. To put down, then, the impious jargon in favour of the Hindoo "religion," we have only to say that that religion is false; that though there are occasional truths in the detail, the *system* is false.

This sentence being passed on a superstition, the investigation of its properties is reduced to a matter of curiosity only; and as such, that of the Hindoos may be highly interesting to inquisitive and philosophic men, just as the murderer Patch, when no longer regarded as a *man*, was said to have been, however, an admirable subject for dissection. The leading properties of this superstition are exceedingly conspicuous. First, it is the most marvellous system of priestcraft that the world ever saw, or the spirit of darkness ever inspired. The Brahmuns are every thing, and every thing is for the Brahmuns. It is astonishing to see with what ingenuity and vigilance their interest has complicated itself with every thing existing or acting throughout the whole economy of society. All the large and palpable advantages they are privileged to seize rampant; but the policy of the system has also insinuated their monopoly and precedence into all the minutest circumstances; a spider could not get into a narrower angle, an earwig could not edge into a closer crevice, than the craft of Brahmunnism is seen to do throughout every page of the Institutes of this superstition. It bears on every part of it the glaring evidence of having been framed, not for the benefit of mankind as a genus, but of the privileged class as a species.

Adverting to what may be called the theology of the system, no one denies that a number of very abstracted and elevated ideas relating to a Deity are found in the ancient books, whether these ideas had descended traditionally from the primary communication of divine truth to our race, or had diverged so far towards the east from the revelation

imparted through Moses to the Jews. But it is also obvious that the Indian writers had a very imperfect hold of these ideas, and tried in vain to fix them in a stability of definition, or prolong them through their speculations as the stamina of their doctrines. Immediately after a noble thought there shall come a train of fantastic and puerile conceits, adapted to prove that the superior conceptions were not original in minds so little capable of habitually thinking up to their level. They had some notion of a supreme spirit; but this idea had a wonderfully slight influence to prevent or to dignify the dreams of mythology; for their literature swarms with an infinity of gods or debtas, many of them of a ridiculous, and many of an insufferably odious description. This Vindicator is angry at Dr. Buchanan for asserting that the Hindoos have "no moral gods." But the Doctor may assert it again, with undiminished confidence, and support himself with such an accumulation of evidence as no reader's disgust would let him go to the end of. There is not one of the divinities of any notorious consequence that is not competently stocked with vices, according to the sacred books of their adorers; and we wonder this new worshipper should not have been kept, by the consciousness of his profound ignorance, from the folly of exposing himself so far as to adduce the Indian Triad in refutation of Dr. Buchanan's assertion!

He talks, with delight, of the pious and moral allegory which is perfectly obvious and intelligible to him throughout the whole region of Hindoo mythology; and cites, as an example, Doorga fighting Mykassoor in the form of a buffalo, which means—how is it possible it can mean any thing else?—that virtue wars with vice; which notable piece of instruction, he says, is exhibited in pictures in ever so many places in Calcutta, where vice is no doubt very much restrained by this palpable and formidable lesson, this "speaking picture of good sense," as he calls the disgusting and hideous figure of Doorga. True enough, much of the mythology was originally founded in allegory; but boundless extravagancies of imagination have, in most cases totally obscured the original meaning, and not one Hindoo in a hundred, that hears the story, knows or cares anything about

the moral ; by which neglect, indeed, he probably suffers very trifling loss in the article of religion.

But mythology enters but little into the "religion" of a great proportion of the Hindoos ; for the lower order are a very little more than mere worshippers of idols, and not a few of the unlearned part of even the Brahmins fail to carry their ideas beyond the idol, to which this writer pretends that even the most ignorant approach with no other view, than to aid their minds to raise their contemplations to "celestial beings."

It is well known that excesses of indecency, of a grossness almost inconceivable, and certainly unutterable, are practised as rites of worship before some of the idols. The Vindicator, however, says,—

"Of the nature of the 'disgusting vices practised before these idols,' I am entirely ignorant, for though I have visited many temples of celebrity, in Bengal, Benares, Mutha, Canouge, and Harduar, and a hundred places besides, yet I have never witnessed any exhibition at their shrines that bore the appearance of indecency."—P. 100.

He may be perfectly sincere in this declaration, and yet have actually witnessed such vices ; for there is a moral sense necessary, as well as the sense of seeing, to perceive fully the disgusting quality of vice and indecency. He has probably seen in these hundred temples, very many times, the direct worship of the *Lingam* !!!—but it was not worth while, certainly it was not, to indulge any squeamish feelings of European moral taste ! We could here fill many pages with loathsome descriptions, now on our table, of what it must have been inevitable for him sometimes to have seen ; and it cannot be for fear of hurting the moral sensibility which has been refined into Indian delicacy, that we forbear to insert them.

As to the morality of the Hindoo system, it would necessarily be of the most depraved character, if there were no other cause than the castes. A large part of the moral code must relate to the interchange of equity among human beings ; but what is to be the basis of such a code, when these human beings are assumed, or rather made, to be several distinct races of creatures, who can scarcely have any

principles of social justice in common,—and when every rule and precaution for the preservation of this distinction, operates to the exclusion of benevolence? What will be the spirit of that morality, of which it is an express injunction on the Brahmin to despise the Sudra? Between the pride and contempt of the one, and the wretched degradation of the other, all kind affections, and all generous exercise of justice are annihilated. Apart however, from the castes, the Hindoo morality defies all comparison for absurdity. The compressed view of it, in the Institutes of Menu, is extolled by this unfortunate writer, as the model of wisdom, and is most exactly deserving of his praise; for it is probably the most ridiculous and abominable assemblage of absurdity and priestcraft that ever insulted the slaves of superstition in any age or country.

VINDICATION OF THE BAPTIST MISSIONARIES.

A Reply to a Letter, addressed to John Scott Waring, Esq., in Refutation of the illiberal and unjust Observations and Strictures of the anonymous Writer of that Letter. By MAJOR SCOTT WARING. 8vo. 1808.

A CLASS of saints in India,—and it is the most sanctified class,—commands the admiration of the natives, and excites the ridicule of foreigners, by the exhibition of limbs distorted and stiffened by a voluntary penance to please the gods. It must be amusing enough to the profane, to see the solemn gravity of countenance with which the *yogi* or *fakier* comes along with his arms raised and crossed over his head for life, or with one arm sent bolt upright from the shoulder, never again to interfere in the concerns of its owner, and never to come in contact with his person, unless mischance or malice should happen to snap down the withered stick. It must be curious to consider, that while other men's limbs will perform an infinite number of optional movements, his will remain faithful to their "religious" crook or poker-fashion, and will be found cutting the air in just the same figure, if the public should be

favoured with the sight of them twenty years hence. Something analogous to this appears to have taken place in the mental faculties of our worthy acquaintance, Major Scott Waring. When in the preface to his "Observations" he first set himself forth in a disgusting posture, we could have no idea that he was, to the exactest nicety, to stiffen in that very predicament; from the evident aversion to Christianity, we might indeed have expected performances not less true in their general spirit to Paganism than the first; but it could not be foreseen that from the moment of finishing that first, the writer's mind should become incapable of altering, thenceforth, the action of its faculties, even in the smallest perceptible degree, and that, as a true intellectual *fakeer*, it should be cramped into one precise specific mode of inviolable deformity. Such however seems to be the case; two large pamphlets have quickly succeeded the first, and the three taken together form such an instance of hopeless iteration, of absolute dead sameness, as the English public never saw before; and it will happen contrary to all present probability, if this most unfortunate man do not continue to the very last day of his life repeating incessantly, without the chance of any variation, even of phrase, that the missionaries are mad Calvinistic sectaries, that the Indians never can be converted, that it is madness to think of it, that there has never been one good convert, &c. &c. &c.

It is certainly a hapless condition to have the mind thus set and shrivelled into one unalterable and degrading position of its faculties; but if we regret to see the spectacle, it is not on account of Christianity, as the object of the fixed enmity of such a mind; for no mode of hostility can be more innoxious than the pure insensate reiteration, without the possibility of a diversification or novelty, of a few false or futile propositions. Not, however, that the Christian religion could have had anything to fear from the slender talents of our *fakeer*, even if this fatal arrest had not annihilated their free agency, by crooking and clinching them into this one peculiar cramp of impiety.

In making a very few remarks on the assertions repeated in our author's second and third pamphlets, it is not of the smallest consequence which of these assertions is noticed

first. It is said over again, a countless number of times, that the increase of missionaries, bibles, and tracts, had been represented to the mutinous troops at Vellore, and had greatly contributed to rouse their apprehensions that the Government intended to force them into Christianity. Now whether he did or did not receive this account from "gentlemen in India," we can imagine his anger and vexation on finding it *proved* an utter falsehood, in a recent and decisive publication,* attributed to a person of the very highest authority, who has informed the public, that in a very long and minute examination of a great number of the surviving sepoys, before a commission of inquiry at Madras, *none of those troops, in assigning the causes of their anger and tumult, made any mention of missionaries or Christian books*, which beyond all question they would eagerly have done in extenuation of their conduct, if that conduct had in any degree whatever been prompted by such a cause. For the truth of this statement, he appeals to the official reports of that commission, now deposited in the India House. It will take some considerable time, for the unfortunate Major to collect himself up from the splinters and fragments in which he is dashed by this demolishing blow.

A very favourite sentence in all the three pamphlets, and which is repeated beyond the patience of enunciation, is that unless the missionaries are recalled, or at least all their Christian operations suppressed, our Indian empire will be terminated within twelve months, by a general insurrection of the people. Now the only English missionaries who have as yet been able to make any very active exertions, are those in Bengal; and this same man says that *those missionaries* have been confined to a very narrow scope, and have produced but a slight effect of any kind on the minds of the people.

He incessantly cites the expression of one of the missionaries, Mr. Marshman, that the appearance of one of them in a bigoted city "would create universal alarm," and asks how there can be any safety for our empire and people if such men are permitted to remain. It is to be regretted

* Considerations on the Practicability, Policy, and Obligation of communicating to the Natives of India the Knowledge of Christianity.

that Mr. Marshman had not used a more precise term, or added some explanation, in speaking of the sensation caused in the popular mind by the appearance of the missionaries; but if he has used a term of a signification too little defined for so important a subject, is it not the last excess of absurdity for a man in England to assume to interpret this term by any other rule than that supplied by this missionary himself and his associates? Is it not a stupidity beyond example to talk and rant in a way which assumes that the missionary, in this single expression, must mean some *other kind or degree of alarm* than that which he and the others describe and illustrate, with so much simplicity, diversity, and particularity of narrative, in the substance of their communications? Does this man imagine that, in writing the expression in question, Mr. Marshman was *betrayed* for once into the acknowledgment of some quite different kind of alarm, which had been so carefully concealed, that not a hint of it had been suffered to transpire in the numerous letters and journals, till this unlucky sentence revealed the secret? Verily it was most marvellous, that after Mr. Marshman and his associates had with unequalled care and collusion kept this alarm a profound secret for a number of years, this identical and discreet Mr. Marshman should deliberately sit down to declare it in a paper which he had no doubt would be printed in Europe. Or say that this dire secret was communicated in confidence to Mr. Fuller, the secretary of the Baptist Missionary Society (for the letter was addressed to him), and that it was through *his* simplicity that it was betrayed in England. No, no, it had been much more for the case of the Major's galled feelings that Mr. Fuller had been a man simple enough to have been capable of falling, in such a case, into such an error. But it is quite ludicrous to see this unlucky phrase of Mr. Marshman reverted to so many score of times, with such an air of significance and solemnity, as if it had let out some portentous discovery, and as if this one solitary expression contained the sole and entire information to be found in all the ample statements of the missionaries, respecting the manner in which they are regarded and received by the natives. The kind of alarm to which Mr. Marshman referred, is illustrated through every sheet of the Periodica

Accounts; every reader is competent from those documents to judge of its nature, extent, and probable result; and every reader whose glimmering of sense has not been extinguished in prejudice and irreligion, can see that an alarm which never excites the people to anything more than occasional expressions of abuse, which never asks the missionary whether he is not commissioned by his government, nor ever expresses to him a suspicion that he is so, and which permits the unprotected itinerant to return with impunity and without the smallest apprehension, to the same place, and on the same errand, as often as he pleases, may fairly be allowed at least a few centuries to grow into a desperation and a compact which shall threaten the safety of the English and their empire.

At the suggestion of the writer of the anonymous letter to which this third pamphlet is a reply, the Major has furnished himself with the statement of the Baptist Missionary Society, which by giving him a few facts not previously known to him, has for a few moments a little relieved him from the distress and durance of desperate sameness, and thrown one very transient gleam of something like novelty, over a wide tract of incomparably dull and stagnant composition. He charges the missionaries with having gone illegally to India, with violating the law of the country in itinerating without passports, and of having been "in open rebellion" at the time when two new missionaries, arriving at Calcutta, and being commanded by an order of council to return to Europe, pleaded the protection of the Danish Government at Serampore, where they had joined their brethren previously to the passing of this order. But little needs be said on any of these particulars. If, in 1793, Messrs. Carey and Thomas found the government so adverse to permit any attempt toward Christianizing the Hindoos, (even before there were Twinings and Scott Waring's so covetous of disgrace as to rant about the danger and intolerance of such an attempt), that a passage to India could not be obtained in an English ship, they must have felt a less degree of zeal than good men are accustomed to feel for a great object, if they could not have resolved to put their undertaking on the ground of committing themselves to a Superior Power, and abiding the consequence. That con-

sequence proved to be, an ultimate necessity of retiring from the British territory; and thus even an enemy might allow, that something like an even balance was struck between the missionaries and the Christian government, which they had so insulted and endangered, by venturing, unauthorized, to touch a corner of its million of square miles, with a view to impart the gospel to some of the miserable pagan inhabitants. Thus they went out unauthorized; and if it should be admitted, that the refusal of a passage in an English ship, was really and strictly a prohibition of their entering India (which however their admission in India proved that it was not), and if it should then be asked—Was not this violating a primary Christian obligation of obedience to government? it would become a Christian to answer, that this obligation does not extend to any thing purely religious; for if it did, it would by the same law extend to every thing in religion which it would be possible for a government to force within its cognizance, and would make it a duty to hold the authority of the magistrate more sacred than any other authority in the universe, even were he to forbid a Christian teacher to carry religious instruction into the next parish, or the next village, or the next house, or even avowedly and visibly to give religious instruction to the persons in his own house; and this would be an obligation, which we need not say that no Christian's conscience was ever yet capable of feeling.

It should however be observed, that Messrs. Carey and Thomas and their friends, did not feel themselves precisely in such a dilemma. They knew that the refusal of an authorized passage did not amount to an absolute prohibition of their entering India; and they knew besides, that if it had, both our own and all other governments are willing to connive at many things which they do not choose expressly to authorize; and they trusted that, if once they were in India, the disinterested purity of their motives, and the peacefulness of their conduct, would secure them a silent toleration in the prosecution of a work, in which it would be evident it was impossible they could have any political or lucrative object in view. Such a connivance they did experience a considerable time, and were thankful that a purely benevolent and religious design could obtain even thus much indulgence; while they knew that the purpose of

solely making a fortune would have obtained not tolerance, but a full legal sanction, for the departure from England, and the pursuits in India.

After fixing their principal residence within the Danish settlement, they thought it right to continue to avail themselves of the privilege of connivance, to itinerate into the British dominions. Nothing was done clandestinely; the government knew that they travelled to various places to preach to the natives, and that they did this without passports; it knew that they dispersed tracts and testaments; it knew that several missionaries had been gradually added to the number, and knowing all this, the government appointed the chief of these missionaries to a highly respectable station in the college of Fort William, while the principal clergymen of the Bengal establishment became the zealous friends of the men and of their designs. Now what would have been thought of the sense of Mr. Carey and his associates, if they had been seized with a violent anxiety to forego their privileges, and to fetter themselves with a law, of which the governing power was content to suspend the operation?

Some acknowledgment is perhaps due to our author, for relieving the dull depravity of his uniform pages, with here and there an extra piece of folly, so ludicrous as to brisken the desponding reader, and enable him to get on half a sheet further. The best thing of this sort in his last pamphlet, is where he talks of the missionaries being "in open rebellion," on the occasion of their pleading the rights of Danish subjects, for the two additional ones who were commanded to return to Europe. To talk of nine men, without a pistol, sword, or pike, among them all, being "in open rebellion" against the power of a great empire, had been almost sufficiently absurd, even for this unfortunate man and his associates, if these nine men had really been subjects of the British government; but it does sound like a fatuity in which this ill-fated man can have no rival associates, when it is said of a company of persons who were absolutely the subjects of another government, the former seven by their formally recognized establishment under it for a number of years, and two strangers by their being added to the number through the conveyance of an Ame-

rican ship cleared for Serampore. It was by sufferance, that they were at any time on British territory; but on the Danish they were by authority. We suppose our author, when he was at once an officer and clergyman in India, used to get into a violent fret when any soldiers not belonging to the corps under his command happened to be near him, and had not the manners humbly to ask for his orders, and devoutly listen to his reading of prayers.

By the way, he piques himself not a little on this exploit of reading prayers, and says, in so many words, he "thinks he made a much better clergyman than any Calvinistic Methodist or Baptist in India would have made, for protestants of the Church of England." (Reply, p. 41.) Assuredly, had we been of his congregation, we should have endeavoured to comport ourselves in a manner worthy of protestants of the Church of England; but yet we cannot help imagining the distress to which we might on some unfortunate occasion have been reduced, by the too possible circumstance of the worthy Major's Prayer-Book being mislaid or wickedly secreted. It would have overwhelmed us with mortification, to hear perhaps some ignorant corporal say to his comrade, that the Prayer-Book, not the man, was the chaplain: nothing indeed could have been more stupid or false, but still we fear we should have had no prayers that day. Or if, to complete the mischief, some layman, just like Mr. Carey, had by ill luck happened to come among us at this moment of distress and confusion, and had obtained permission this once to pray for us, Major and all, in his devout, affectionate, and rational strain, with his fine fluency of expression, and a happy adaptation to immediate characters and circumstances, we cannot but fear that though *we* as well as the Major might have remained unshaken, the stupid soldiery might have fancied this a far superior kind of performance to the *Major's* reading, and might, the next Sunday, have deserted to the Methodists by dozens, rank and file. The Major and we, however, should have entertained all due contempt for the taste and opinion of the rabble, the very dregs of the people.

Throughout the Major's pamphlets, especially the two latter ones, there is a most laborious effort to flatter and

coax the clergy and other members of the Established Church, while an equal toil is sustained to bury alive all sectaries, and the missionaries as sectaries, under as large a heap of abuse as this man's vulgar malice could accumulate. But, really, even in this last humble vocation he fails sadly. He is too sterile even to invent or vary terms and phrases of obloquy; and "madmen," and "illiterate bigots," the addition of "hot-heads & Calvinists," nearly circumscribe the reach and resources of his vocabulary. This might warn him, that he has now done nearly all he ~~can~~ do, and had better be content without afflicting his faculties with any further trial, since when a man fails in that thing which he is confessedly able to do best, it is all over with him as to the matter of talents. And as to the attempt to cajole the members of the Established Church, it will defeat itself, we should think; as all serious persons in that church, who may read the Major's pamphlets, will adopt the memorable words of the ancient, "What bad thing have we done, that has obtained us this man's praise?" But he will not leave them at a loss, he most fervently extols the church and its clergy for having scarcely ever made an effort to diffuse the gospel into heathen countries; while the hated sectaries, without the smallest view to their own interest, are forsaking their homes, parting from their friends, surrendering for ever all possibilities of ease, luxury, or wealth, and compassing sea and land to make proselytes. This is the most sagacious artifice by which it was ever attempted to wheedle the members of the establishment, and the choicest compliment ever paid to their Christian principles. But even if those Christian principles were as debased as he assumes, by extolling them on the ground of such merits and such a contrast, he will find that the members of the church are not so bereft of policy as to thank him for his compliments, or allow him to constitute himself their representative. They will be aware that nothing under heaven would have a more powerful and instantaneous effect to multiply dissenters, by driving conscientious men out of the church, than for the clergy and distinguished members of that church to suffer their principles to be identified, in the view of the public, with those of this unhappy man and his coadjutors. There may be

some few clergymen who would not abscond from their congregations and their Christian connexions, from the ignominy of having been cited by him as concurring with his notions and wishes : his friend the Bishop of Asaph, of whom he asks, with an incomparably ludicrous simplicity, "Was *he* a bigot or irreligious?" would no doubt, had he been living, have braved such disgrace ; but the great majority of churchmen will feel it necessary to their characters, even if they do not to their consciences, to resist the attempt to brand them with the stigma of an alliance of principle with a man who abhors nothing on earth so much as the attempts of Christianity to extirpate the abominations of Paganism ; and some of the more serious of them will be so confounded to find that their church must acknowledge such a man for one of its members, that as the only consolation for belonging to it, they will attach themselves wholly to that *evangelical* section of it which he hates.

The missionaries are sectaries, and therefore totally unfit and disqualified, as a very large portion of these pamphlets is occupied in repeating, to teach Christianity, even if a mission *were* to be permitted in Hindostan. Now what is the meaning of all this ? Does the unfortunate man really mean to say that the Established Church is infallible, and that too while it is before his face that its members are unable to agree as to the purport of its articles, or to the extent of the obligation under which they are to be subscribed, and are indefinitely divided and opposed in their opinions, forming a political compact for a temporal advantage of religious parties who are respectively schismatics in each other's estimation ? If the infallibility of such a church, or indeed of any church, is an absurdity too gross for even this man to advance, where is the sense or decency of railing against sectaries ? If the church *may* be wrong, the sectaries, or some of them, *may* be right ; the authority for imputing error is perfectly equal on either side, and is no other than freedom of individual judgment—a freedom evidently not to be contravened but by demonstrated infallibility or the vilest tyranny. But perhaps the Major, forbearing to make any claim of infallibility for the Established Church, and any pretence of better natural

faculties in the minds of its members than in those of the sectaries, will say, however, that the religious instructions and studies, from which churchmen form their theological opinions, are infinitely better adapted to give them a true knowledge of Christianity, and to prepare them to impart it to heathens, than those by which such men as Mr. Carey and his friends are qualified for that important office. How so? The profound and devout study of the Scriptures is confessedly the grand process for understanding religion, and the sedulous, and repeated, and varied explication of them to persons under every diversity of circumstances, is the best imaginable discipline for acquiring the talent of instruction and persuasion, on this ground we may defy any church in Europe, whether established or schismatical, to supply more accomplished missionaries than Mr. Carey and several of his friends, men whose biblical labours are prosecuted with an ardour which threatens our pagans at home, and the Brahmms and the Bonzes of the East, with a translation of the Bible into every language of Asia in the course of a few years, and who at the same time have preached more in a twelvemonth than perhaps any of the dignitaries of any establishment in Europe. And pray what does the sapience of our Major imagine it likely that the subscription to Forty-nine Articles, and the imposed hand of a prelate could have added to men like these; and which of the Christian doctrines have they failed to understand or explain, for want of these momentous pre-requisites? But it is not the essential endowments of the men that the Major would care about, if he could permit any mission at all to Hindostan. The only question with him would be, whether they had passed through certain formalities of mere human and political appointment, and declared themselves members of a certain ecclesiastical corporation, or whether they acted simply as men to whom heaven has given understanding and the New Testament, and who can acknowledge no other authority in religion. If the latter, not all the virtue and learning of Carey could obtain license or toleration; if the former, the men would do perfectly well, though their qualifications should reach no further than the ability of reading, like the Major when he was chaplain, a number of printed prayers and sermons. He has no idea of religion as

a thing which exists, and can be taught independently of the appointments of the state; and when its conveyance to a foreign country is the subject in question, the only view in which his unfortunate understanding is capable of regarding it, is that of an article of commerce, under the distinction of lawful and contraband. The exportation of Christianity from England in any other than English bottoms, and by any other than persons of the Established Church, is to be considered, he thinks, as a branch of the smuggling trade, and ought to be prohibited or punished accordingly. This really appears to be the whole extent of any conception that he has on the subject; so that when he says (Reply, p. 80), that Messrs. Carey and Thomas "*were smuggled out to India*," (he writes it in italics), and when he somewhere applies the same term to the sending of a missionary to Buenos Ayres, he really does not seem to wish to be understood as adopting a figurative expression.

His anger at this last transaction breaks out afresh in each successive pamphlet; and he takes the trouble to say over again, that it was a violation of the articles of capitulation, which engaged to the inhabitants of Buenos Ayres the free exercise of their religion. It would be hopeless to repeat to such a besotted understanding that freedom is violated by nothing but coercion. But why does he not say again what he said in the preface to his Observations, that "the universal hatred of which the General and Admiral complain, is more likely to have been caused from the folly of sending out a *Protestant Missionary* than by any other circumstance?" (preface, p. lxx). This vile absurdity was at first safely left to itself in the absence of public and official documents respecting the circumstances in South America; but some of our readers will have observed, in reading the Report of General Whitelocke's trial, that General Craufurd and Colonel Pack asserted the extreme irritation of the natives to have arisen *from reported cruelties committed by the British*.

It were easy, but very useless, to employ many pages more in exposing the folly and depravity exhibited in this pamphlet. We will dismiss it by applauding the honesty of one particular part, which would reveal the main principle of all that this man has written on the present question, if

that principle had not already been sufficiently apparent: he praises and recommends, without any hint whatever of exception, the pamphlet called "A Vindication of the Hindoos," which pamphlet is no less than a downright and most vulgar and impudent defence of the collective abominations of the heathenism of Hindostan. We are glad to see these men reciprocally adopting one another as congenial friends in the same cause. Mr. Twining, in his second edition, referred with approbation to Major Scott Waring. Major Scott Waring referred with complacency and approbation to Mr. Twining and his production; the Vindicator of the Hindoos cited the Major as his ally, and now the league is completed by the Major's applauding reference to the Vindicator. As if desperate both of his cause and his character, he has even claimed the "Barrister" as an associate.

POETICAL CRITICISM

Lectures on the Truly Eminent English Poets By Percival Stockdale. 2 vols 8vo. 1807.

AN apprehension of not receiving quite so much instruction from a very large work ought to convey, was excited in our minds, we will acknowledge, by the title of these volumes. We could not see the promise of intellectual precision, in the attempt to qualify the epithet, specifying the class of poets, with an adverb which confuses the meaning; still less when this adverb is put as the prominent and distinctive term of the designation. The reader knows that each of the English poets is either eminent or not so, and asks what inconceivable class of eminent poets it can be, from which the *truly* eminent are to be distinguished. The preface indeed explains, that this word was inserted, because Dr. Johnson has introduced among the eminent poets some names which had no just claim to be there. But besides that the title of any large work, professing to be of an important

and permanent quality, should have in itself a perfect meaning exclusive of any tacit reference to other books, it seems obvious to remark, that Dr. Johnson's placing the lives of several very inferior poets among those of the eminent ones, has in no degree rendered those inferior poets eminent; and therefore there needs no double array of distinctive words to inclose the elevated ground occupied by the great poets, and guard it from unhallowed intrusion.

It is one of the chief objects of this work, to follow the track of Johnson through the writings, and through parts of the history, of several of our great poets, in order to rectify some of the wrongs which we all acknowledge to have been done by our celebrated biographer. This was surely a meritorious design, for there are parts of the Lives of the Poets which every lover of literary or moral justice would be glad to see stamped with an indelible brand of reprobation, with a disgrace so signal and conspicuous, as to be a perpetual warning against the perversion of criticism and private history by political and religious bigotry and personal spleen. He would wish the work of the formidable critic to bear, like the wolf of Romulus in the capitol, some lasting marks of the effect of lightning. But the difficulty of inflicting such effectual retribution on Johnson as to rescue the victims of his injustice, is too forcibly proved to us, even by our own feelings. There has been a great deal of sensible and incontrovertible writing in defence of Milton and Gray, and our judgments are perfectly convinced that the one was a much more amiable man, and the other a much greater poet, than Johnson has represented, yet, in spite of this conviction, it is always Johnson's moral picture of Milton, and Johnson's estimate of the poetry of Gray, that are the first to recur to our minds when the names are introduced. The energy of the writing has reduced us to a certain degree of the same kind of subjection as that which Milton himself has imposed on our imagination with regard to Satan and our first parents, of whom we may strive in vain to form ideas materially different from those which have been fixed in our minds from reading "Paradise Lost." And, therefore, while we have often wished to see the great literary tyrant deposed, we are afraid that something more is requisite for the achievement than merely to convince the

people of his injustice ; it is necessary to display something like a rival vigour of talent, an eloquence adapted to command by its energy, separately from the justice of its object, a power which shall appear formed on purpose to crush or to baffle giants and monsters. There was no chance for invading the den of Cacus till Hercules arrived, nor for the deliverance of the Greeks from that of the Cyclops, but through the agency of Ulysses.

There could not be a more zealous vindicator of injured poets against the iniquity of criticism than the present writer. He will obtain full credit for courage and sincere enthusiasm in the cause, for more than ordinary resources of some kind, displayed in extending the warfare over so vast a field of paper, and perhaps for a generous and liberal motive to the hostility. Nevertheless, we think it will end, as the other quarrels of Europe were till lately accustomed to end, in the *status quo ante bellum*. Each of the poets will hold exactly the same place in the public and in each reader's estimation as before. Indeed, our author's opinions of them do not materially differ from those which are generally entertained already, excepting his strange idolatry of Chatterton. It was perfectly well understood before that Spenser had wrought a rich imagination into perplexing labyrinths of allegory ; that Milton advanced into regions of which every other poet had stopped and trembled at the dark confines, and of which the inhabitants might almost have mistaken him, as to his intellectual grandeur, for one of themselves ; that Shakspeare could make all sorts of human creatures with far less trouble than by the method ascribed to Deucalion and Pyrrha, of tossing pebbles over their heads ; that Dryden performed wonders of diversified excellence both in poetry and prose, under what are called the frowns of fortune ; that the works of Pope are the perfection of beauty in literature ; and so of the rest. It was not necessary for this to be repeated at such length, unless for the sake of some bright and original illustration, or with the development of some new characteristic in the genius and works of each of our well-known poets. But no man who has read and admired them, will read them the next time with any new perceptions derived from the work before us ; nor will the gall which Johnson may have sprinkled on

their writings, or on the features of their character, be at all removed by this long process of critical lustration.

From the beginning of this work to the end, there is a total renunciation of all method and regularity; it exceeds all former examples of literary rambling. The author seems to go through his subject by a succession of purely casual motions, just as we used, when we were boys, to go through a wood picking nuts, where our turning to the right, or the left, or going forward or backward, was determined, at each step, by what happened to pop on our sight at the moment. He will go on perhaps one or two pages with tolerable propriety after some particular topic; this topic vanishes in turning the corner of some unlucky sentence; another starts up, and is eagerly pursued about the same length, when this also slides out of sight, and leaves the pursuer to chase any thing that happens to present itself next. He will begin perhaps with a flaming eulogium of a favourite poet; at the tenth or twelfth sentence, the name of Johnson may chance to come across him; this is sure to send him off in a violent invective against the bigotry, the spleen, the prejudice, the want of taste, and the illiberality of the great critic; quickly the impulse takes a turn, and shoots him away from Johnson to strike impetuously against the stupidity of the age, and perhaps the flimsy works of its poets; through these he dashes in a moment, and is gone, almost before we can cry out for mercy for them, to attack booksellers, antiquarians, metaphysicians, priests, courts, tasteless ministers of state, and proud mean-spirited patrons; it is never long, however, before he reverts to himself, with new avowals of independence of judgment, of ardour for truth, and worship of genius, and with very equivocal expressions of an humble estimate of his powers to do justice to his undertaking. For fifty pages together there shall be no sign of progress, but the advancing figures at the top. We are kept in a most violent motion but cannot get on. An active boisterous kind of diction whirls the very same sentiments, praises, and invectives, in an everlasting eddy. Each eminent poet in the train is overwhelmed with a profuse repetition of the same epithets of magnificence, which are rather flung at him than applied to him. The gentle bards are actually pelted with praise; the favours of their eulogist are sent from a

cross-bow, and impinge on the revered personages with such a vengeance as to cause an echo through the whole temple of the muses. The impassioned violence of the author's manner, and his incomparably strange phraseology, prevent the continual recurrence of the same forms of indiscriminating applause and condemnation from acquiring exactly the appearance of common-place. It is perceived indeed to be *his* common-place; but it is so different from that of other writers, that it maintains a cast of novelty. It takes considerable time, and leads us farther than we should have been induced to go, if the same endless repetition of sentiments so defective in intellectual force had invited us in ordinary language.

A certain expression of ingenuousness and sensibility in the author's character, makes us resist, as long as we can, the conviction that this turbulence of the language does not arise from a vigorous intellectual operation, agitating the composition by a rapid succession of new forms of energetic thought, but from an impetuosity of temperament, rendered still more vehement by a continual recurrence of the mind, in its desultory course, to the same ideas. When this conviction can no longer be escaped, we do wonder to observe with how small a portion of effectual thinking it is possible to write many hundred pages.

A constant extravagance of expression is the most obvious feature of the performance. The author never thinks of using the sober established diction of simple criticism; his feelings are always in an ebullition, and running over with a fire and steam that drive off all other critics and admirers of poetry, who are virtually reproached with being as cold as arctic fishes. For epithets and enthusiasm, Longinus was a Scotch metaphysician in comparison. He has just the language of a person who has seen something marvellous for the first time, and is telling it to persons who have never seen it at all; the language in which the first adventurers to India might be supposed to tell, at their return, of elephants, and palaces, and Moguls, and treasures, and idols of massy gold, and to tell it all over again with an impossibility of making themselves tired. The word "glorious" is applied to the poets and their verses, in a manner, and with a frequency, which would have irritated

every man of those poets, if they could have heard this critic, into a resolution never to employ that word again. "Illustrious," and "immortal," would have been in danger of the same exclusion. The application to writers and their works, of terms appropriate to celestial subjects and beings, involves a profaneness, in which we wonder what literary advantage an author can see to reconcile him to the guilt. Shakspeare is here "divine," Milton is "divine," Dryden is "divine," Pope is "divine," Chatterton is "divine," and probably several others of the poets; and how much more does any body know about them from such a description? What is the use of being told of a "divine genius," a "divine soul," a "divine poem," or of writing or of reading that Dryden beheld in Shakspeare, "his divine master?"* What is to be learned from this extravagance, except that the author has never accustomed himself to a discriminative estimate of the works that he admires, and that he has found out there is room enough in terms of vastness to hide the want of terms of precision?

We shall not be required to give any regular account of the successive lectures, or of any one of them. The number is twenty, and the poets forming their subjects are Spenser, Shakspeare, Milton, Dryden, Pope, Young, Thomson, Chatterton, and Gray. We were more pleased with the vindication of Milton against the illiberality of Johnson, than any other part. And the supremacy of Milton's genius and performance gives a better grace to the lecturer's extravagant language, than it could receive from any other of his subjects. We will extract some paragraphs in his best manner.

"I have been defending the out works of our poetical hero; let me take a view of his large and lofty citadel. Milton's poem is founded on our religion. Here the poet made a most judicious choice because by that choice, the sentiments of our best belief, and of our profoundest veneration, co-operated with genius, to give a kind of reality even to the vast objects of his peculiarly amplifying and creative powers. The choice was happy for another reason. Conscious that those powers were of a magnitude almost more than human, he was determined that they

* Rousseau also is "divine" and "glorious." We are even told of "the glorious Fielding."

should produce images worthy of their immensity. He knew that too excessive a greatness in mind, in character, and in form, could hardly be attributed to the persons and regions which lay before him. He knew it; and he took a flight without limits: he saw, and he presented to *our* sight, the most contrasted and astonishing objects; perfect beauty, and perfect deformity; beings of infinite dread, and of infinite majesty. His theatre is unbounded space; its scenes, its machinery, and its heroes, exist and act, in unbounded duration. The descriptive powers of the poet, his spirit and his fire are congenial with his objects. Those powers either give us a calm, but heartfelt delight; they captivate our fancy with their serene, but expanded charms; or we are irresistibly transported with their rapidity, and their ardour. Without any general, or infatuated prejudice; but with nature, I hope, and reason, for *me*.* Milton might dispense with those rules of accuracy which, perhaps, could not, with propriety, be altogether neglected by any other poet; though by a generous poet, they will never be minutely observed: and I wish that I had ability and importance enough to enfeeble the reign of their coercion. In his serene and beautiful, and in his tumultuous and tremendous scenery, he arrests our eager attention; he wins all the interest of our heart; he converts fiction into reality; he seizes, and holds fast, by his potent, magical spell, every faculty of the soul;—by the thunder, and lightning of his muse, or by the persuasion, and pathos of her eloquence. Who can object, and censure, because, in the fourth book of *Paradise Lost*, Satan, a spirit, invisible by nature, exposes himself, in a visible form, to the resentment of his adversaries; when, at the side of Eve, in the same book, he starts up, from the toad, in his own shape, at the touch of the spear of Ithuriel? Who, that is endowed with the power of reciprocating fancy, can thus object, and censure; can admit comparative trifles into his mind, while, in reading that exquisite book to which I refer, he is embosomed in the bloom and bliss of *Paradise*; while he imbibes the harmonious, the celestial strains of our seraphic poet? Who, that hath learned the best of learning; to refine learning by sentiment; what active, and expanded breast, born with a passion for the great, and the unbounded, can harbour the frosty logic of criticism; can attend to the cold severity of reason; when they would restrain the poetry, the inspiration of Milton? While *such* a reader, in the sixth book—a book of a more arduous and astonishing structure, is agitated with as excessive rapture as poetry can give, and as human nature can bear;—will he not treat as a cavalier and a trifler;

* We congratulate the reader who can understand this sentence.

will he not treat with a noble contempt or indignation, the critic who shall remind him, that ethereal substances are necessarily invulnerable ; that it was, therefore, their own fault, if they were crushed with their armour ? Will not Johnson ; will not even Addison shrink in his eye ; while, in dread conflict, Michael and Satan are engaged ; the cherubim and seraphim standing aloof, in anxious expectation ; while the heavenly angels are appalled, when the cannon of Pandæmonium begins to play ; while those recollected angels tear up the mountains, and launch them at the foe ;—while all creation shakes at the tempest of this war ; all but the throne of God !”—Pp. 136, 139.

“By being intimately conversant with Milton, our mental powers and affections are purified and exalted to their highest degree of sentiment, by another cause, by *nature* ; I mean, by their communication and contact with a great mind. Milton’s genius, as I have already observed, naturally pursued images for which it was formed ; it ranged amidst the vast and unbounded ; every thing, with *him*, is upon a great scale. Hence, if we are not absolutely in the dregs of mortality, the productions of his genius dilate and sublimiate our souls with collateral ideas. Certainly we must leave all earthly dross behind us, when we mount, with Milton, to the gold that bespangles the firmament. When we survey the august and stupendous forms of his heroes and demigods ; when we listen to their new, but striking, and inspiring eloquence ; to an eloquence characteristic of their forms ; we feel an ambition for true greatness, for the noblest pursuits and passions. When we travel, with *him*, through immeasurable space ; through Earth, Erebus, Chaos, and Olympus ; we look back on our own sublunary state with indifference ; on human beings, with a mild superiority of sentiment. Our morality and religion expand with our excursions ; we deem nothing so diminutive as human pride ; indeed, this “great globe itself, and all who inhabit,” seems but specks on the whole creation. If such effects are produced by a great poet, in the mind of the reader, I will not, with other critics, elaborately endeavour to find a moral in Milton.”—pp. 157, 158.

“What an extraordinary being was this man, whether we view him in his moral, religious, or poetical character ! It is almost impossible for an unprejudiced, good, and susceptible mind, which is powerfully actuated with the love of poetry and virtue ; it is almost impossible for *such* a mind to recollect the full memory of Milton, without paying to that memory an enthusiastic homage ; a kind of inferior adoration. I should suppose that no sensible, and feeling mind could read the following little plain account of him which is transmitted to us, from Dr. Wright, an old clergyman of Dorsetshire, without strong emotions. The

Doctor tells us that 'Milton lived in a small house; with but one room, as he thought, on a floor; where he found him up one pair of stairs; in a chamber hung with rusty green; sitting in an elbow chair; black clothes, but neat enough; pale, but not cadaverous; his hands, and fingers, gouty, and with chalkstones; and that among other discourse, he expressed himself to this purpose; that were he free from the pain which the gout gave him, his blindness would be tolerable.' See Biog. Brit. page 3116: note at *SS*. Compared with this poor small house; and with its faded hangings of rusty green, how does the splendour of what Versailles *was*; how does the pomp of the Escorial shrink; and how are they obscured, to a vigorous and well-regulated understanding; and to an active and generous fancy! thus compared, to what an insignificance does a Charles the Fifth; to what an insignificance does a Louis the Fourteenth sink before the august inhabitant of that humble tenement! before our moral, and poetical hero!"—Pp. 222, 223.

In the course of the work, there are many brief and often unsatisfactory discussions of literary questions. A flighty enthusiasm is ill adapted to speculation; for this will often, in the critical department, require some aid from metaphysics, the introduction of which, in any considerable degree, our authors deprecates, with an emphatic condemnation of Lord Kames and his *Elements of Criticism*. It may be true enough, that Lord Kames had not himself a very delicate taste, and that he and other Northern philosophers sometimes extinguish all the charm of literary beauty by an extreme frigidness in their process of inquiring why it pleases, and that, in pursuing, this inquiry to the utmost reach of subtilty, they entertain too much contempt for those more obvious laws of feeling, by which any reflective man may ascertain the immediate cause of his pleasure in reading any work of eloquence or true poetry. But we may be permitted to observe, that if, as our author maintains, criticism should confine itself, and if all liberal criticism *must* confine itself, to explain only the more obvious causes of the pleasure, and the more obvious rules according to which literary performances must be executed in order to impart such pleasure, it would seem almost superfluous to comment at all on works of taste, since, thus far, no reader of sense will need the critic's assistance, or thank him for obtruding it. We can feel but very slight obligation to a

critic, who is to do little more than tell us that this passage is beautiful, and the other sublime; we were perfectly sensible of this 'beauty and sublimity before, and of an obvious and superficial cause of its pleasing us. It is a deeper explanation that we have to ask of the critic; we would wish to ask him, in the general, what is that relation between the constitution of our nature and the qualities of sublimity and beauty which empowers those qualities to affect us so much, and, in particular, which of the laws or principles of that relation is concerned in the emotion we feel in any given instance of the effect of fine writing. If he is not prepared to do this, or at least to attempt it, we cannot receive him with any high degree of respect; if he only proceeds to declare, here and there, his *feelings* of admiration, we shall be disposed to tell him that we also can *feel*, but that neither his feelings nor ours will be admitted by a third party, as the standard of truth in criticism; and we shall endeavour to persuade him, as we ourselves are persuaded, that we may all gain a good deal of advantage by passing some time in the company of the Caledonian philosophers, who will endeavour to explain to us why we feel, and to ascertain some rules, independent of caprice, for distinguishing when we feel right. And our author may be assured, that no man ever had more occasion for a little of this philosophic lore, than he has himself, according to the testimony of this very performance.

In the lectures on Dryden, nothing struck us more than the lax morality of our author, who is, notwithstanding, a zealous declaimer for virtue throughout the book; but he is so infatuated with admiration of genius, that he seems to think it can do no wrong, as having something very like a privilege to frame a system of morality of its own, in contempt of that which has been instituted by the Creator of the world. Dryden very powerfully assisted to aggravate the depravity of the age in which he lived; and yet, from a consideration of his talents, his ardent poetical feelings, his poverty, the vices of his age, and the persecution of churchmen, who with unparalleled malignity and presumption took it upon them to censure the profligacy of his writings, the apologist contrives to make out that Dryden was a very proper man, and believes he was not without "the

support and approbation of conscious virtue." He closes the case with the following passage, which, if it had appeared in an abler work, would have deserved the last possible severity of condemnation.

"Dryden's plays are licentious; and so far they tend to be unfavourable to virtue. But when *he* wrote, they would infallibly have been damned if they had been more chastened by morality. Congreve was never in the unhappy circumstances of Dryden, yet *his* comedies are far from being delicate. He knew that the manners and taste of his time, demanded some moral sacrifices, if he meant that his plays should be successful. However, if stall-fed theology can convince me, that it would rather have starved than have written as loosely as Dryden wrote, I will give our poet no quarter for his dramatic immoralities."—Pp. 381, 382.

As to Dryden's poverty, and its attendant miseries, which have excited so much generous compassion and indignation in the present and many other authors, we are afraid we do not feel all the sympathy that we ought. We know indeed, very well, that nature has made it absolutely necessary to a great poet to consume at least a hundred times as much in diet and clothing as must suffice for one of us critics (and this, by the way, is very likely to be one main cause of the hostility which we are sometimes reputed to feel against the tuneful tribe, whose voracity threatens us with famine)—but still we are very apt to excuse our insensibility with regard to Dryden, when we are told by Congreve that his hereditary income was a "competency," though he pleads it was "little more than a bare one," when we hear of his receiving for one dedication a present of £500 (a sum of more value than £1,500 now), and when we know that he had a prodigious facility of composition, and might as a writer, have been popular without being vicious. Even this apologist, however, censures him for the debasement to which he reduced himself in his notorious dedications. As to the versatility of Dryden's genius, and the very high literary excellence of many parts of his writings, we should coincide with any language of admiration short of that extravagant one habitually employed by Mr. Stockdale. We will make one more display of the quality of his diction, by

extracting, from the conclusion of the lectures on Dryden, a passage on the influence of poetry.

"It gives a more hideous deformity to vice ;—more celestial charms to virtue ; the heaven-descended magic of poetry accompanies its disciple through every transition of his life :—it actuates and brightens his waking hours ; it whispers peace and serenity to his dreams ; it habitually works his mind to a gentle emotion ;—a pleasing agitation ;—a delightful luxuriance of fancy. The surrounding objects take a similar *relief* ; and he is in a stronger and livelier contact with nature.—This poetical and mighty magic, heightens, to his view, the tints and fragrance of the spring ; it gives a purer transparency to the waters ; a more striking scenery to the course of a majestic river ; it elevates the mountains ;—it aggrandizes the dread magnificence of Heaven ;—it inspires a demonstration of the existence, and providence, of a God ! We see, and we *feel*, that he was the author of *our* solar system ;—and that '*he made the stars also !*'

"All *this* would seem Arabic or romance ; or even madness, to those whose reading goes not beyond reviews, and whose virtue goes not beyond discretion. But I flatter myself," &c. &c. Pp. 401, 402.

Chatterton occupies nearly 400 pages, and gives a boundless scope to all the lecturer's excesses, which rush forth in denunciations of the illiberality and ingratitude of the age and nation, in fierce invectives against Horace Walpole, Mr. Bryant, and the good burghers of Bristol, adorations of the "divine genius," who is now in the "Elysian fields," in which, says Mr. S., "I have no doubt his vindicated and beatified soul enjoys eternal felicity," and in awful intimations that the Almighty may never again "grant an equal phenomenon to an ungrateful world." The whole voluminous amplification about this unfortunate young man is unnecessary and useless in a literary view, and parts of it are, in a moral one, really very disgusting. His genius is extolled to the last monstrosity of hyperbole ; his persevering falsehoods relating to the poems, and his well-known vicious habits, are extenuated into innocence, if not into merit, and even the spirit that impelled him to his wretched exit is partly applauded. He was a great genius, the world treated him unhandsomely, and therefore he was absolved from moral and religious obligation. It was presumption to cen-

sure him if he scoffed at Christianity, if he abandoned himself to dissipation, and if he destroyed himself because he had not the means of supporting it. We cannot profess to know how far any one will think such moral absurdity is atoned for, by the following sort of compliments to Christianity :

“ A most generous and heavenly system ! which will always have the love, and the zeal of every sensible head ; which is actuated by an honest and feeling heart ; of every independent, and ingenuous mind ; whether he is smiled or frowned on, by the hierarchy : who, by their luxury, and pride, and pomp of life, are the representatives of any thing rather than of the Christian religion. So remote, indeed, is the time in which our Saviour lived ; so extraordinary and astonishing are his mission and character ; and so far from the constant course of nature are all the other objects which ushered and accompanied his revelation, that an honest and virtuous man may, to some degree, be a sceptic ; but he will be a sceptic with that modesty and moderation which the subject of his scepticism deserves : while he doubts, he will revere ; while he fears that a system which provides more effectually than all others, for the well-being, for the comfortable existence of mankind, may be human he will most ardently wish that it may be divine ! Such was the scepticism of the unprejudiced and illustrious Rousseau. He states the main topics and arguments in favour of Christianity, and against it, when it is considered as a divine revelation, perspicuously and completely ; and he gives them all their force. I must honestly acknowledge, that the result of this fair and dispassionate reasoning is a reluctant diffidence with a preponderance of belief.

“ Such was the scepticism of the elegant and sublime Rousseau ; whose reasoning faculties were as acute and vigorous, as his imagination was warm and luxuriant. And I must think it an unquestionable truth, that deliberate and vindictive hostilities against Christianity ; the best guide of our lives ; the best soother of our woes ; the best friend to all true pleasure ; were never maintained by any man who was, at once, *good and great*. To rail at it, or to ridicule it, are infallible proofs of a bad taste, and of a bad heart. To persecute this divine institution, from *with a malignity of the deepest dye ; to attack it with ferocity ; to attempt to undermine it, with a miserable iterate sophistry ; to make it the subject of low, clownish* tools of the mind ; which pass with the writer, and with his *ig, for wit ; this gothic warfare was reserved for our intellec-*

tual ruffians and assassins; it was reserved for the literary profligacy of the present times."—Pp. 139 142.

We lament that a man, who has had so many years granted him for the investigation of the evidences of Christianity, should be approaching near the period of his quitting the world, with so slender a hold on its consolations, and so dark an eclipse of its hopes. And how melancholy it is to hear him avow, that a very different kind of hope animates his ambition in the evening of his life.

"To liberal, benevolent, and generous minds, whose good wishes I hope to deserve, I here honestly and openly declare, that I am not a little ambitious of a literary immortality; and it would gratify me extremely to feel the rays of its orient lustre warm, and animate my languid frame before it descends to the tomb."

On this we have only two short and simple remarks; first, this immortality does not await him, and secondly, it would be of no use to him if it did.

PERSONAL VIRTUE IN ITS RELATION TO POLITICAL EMINENCE.

A History of the Early Part of the Reign of James II.; with an Introductory Chapter. By the Right Hon. CHARLES JAMES FOX. To which is added an Appendix. 4to. 1808.

MANY of our celebrated countrymen will always be recollected with regret by persons who take the most serious view of human characters and affairs; but there is no name in the English records of the past century that excites in us so much of this feeling as that of the author of this work. The regret arises from the consideration of what such a man might have been, and might have done. As to talents, perhaps no eminent man was ever the subject of so little controversy, or ever more completely deterred even the most perverse spirit of singularity from hazarding a

hint of doubt or dissent by the certainty of becoming utterly ridiculous. To pretend to talk of any superior man was the same thing, except among a few of the tools or dupes of party, as to name generals to whom Hannibal, or Scipio, or Julius Cæsar, ought to have been but second in command; or poets from whose works the mind must descend to those of Shakspeare and Milton. If all political partialities could be suspended in forming the judgment, we suppose the great majority of intelligent men would pronounce Fox the greatest orator of modern times! and they would be careful to fix the value of this verdict by observing, that they used the term orator in the most dignified sense in which it can be understood. Other speakers have had more of what is commonly, and perhaps not improperly, called brilliance, more novelty and luxuriance of imagery, more sudden flashes, points, and surprises, and vastly more magnificence of language. Burke, especially, was such a speaker; and during his oration the man of intelligence and taste was delighted to enthusiasm in feeling that something so new as to defy all conjectural anticipation was sure to burst on him at every fourth or fifth sentence, and in beholding a thousand forms and phantoms of thought, as if suddenly brought from all parts of the creation, most luckily and elegantly associated with a subject to which no mortal had ever imagined that any one of them could have been related before. Yet this very auditor, if he had wished to have a perplexing subject luminously simplified, or a vast one contracted according to a just scale to his understanding; if he had wished to put himself in distinct possession of the strongest arguments for maintaining the same cause in another place; if he had been anxious to qualify himself for immediate action in an affair in which he had not yet been able to satisfy himself in deliberation; or if he had been desirous for his coadjutors in any important concern to have a more perfect comprehension of its nature, and a more absolute conviction as to the right principles and measures to be adopted respecting it, than all his efforts could give them, he would have wished, beyond all others, to draw Fox's mind to bear on the subject. For ourselves, we think we never heard any man who dismissed us from the argument on a debated topic with such a feeling of satisfied

and final conviction, or such a competence to tell why we were convinced. There was, in the view in which subjects were placed by him, something like the daylight, that simple clearness which makes things conspicuous and does not make them glare, which adds no colour or form, but purely makes visible in perfection the real colour and form of all things round; a kind of light less amusing than that of magnificent lustres or a thousand coloured lamps, and less fascinating and romantic than that of the moon, but which is immeasurably preferred when we are bent on sober business, and not at leisure, or not in the disposition to wander delighted among beautiful shadows and delusions. It is needless to say that Fox possessed in a high degree wit and fancy; but superlative intellect was the grand distinction of his eloquence; the pure force of sense, of plain, downright sense was so great, that it would have given a character or sublimity to his eloquence, even if it had never once been aided by a happy image or a brilliant explosion. The grandeur of plain sense would not have been deemed an absurd phrase, by any man who had heard one of Fox's best speeches.

And as to the moral features of the character, all who knew him concur in ascribing to him a candour, a good-nature, simplicity of manners, and an energy of feeling, which made him no less interesting as a friend, and might have made him no less noble as a philanthropist than he was admirable as a senator.

We have very often surrendered our imagination to the interesting, but useless and painful employment, of tracing out the career which might have been run by a man thus pre-eminently endowed. We have imagined him first rising up through a youth of unrivalled promise to the period of maturity unstained by libertinism, scorning to think for one moment of a competition with the heroes of Bond Street, or any other class of the minions of fashion, and maintaining the highest moral principles in contempt of the profligacy which pressed close around him. It is an unfortunate state of mind in any reader of these pages, whose risibility is excited, when we add to the sketch that solemn reverence for the Deity, and expectation of a future judgment, without which it is a pure matter of fact that there is no such thing

on earth as an invincible and universal virtue. Instead of unbounded licentiousness, our imaginary young statesman has shown his contempt of parsimony by the most generous modes of expense which humanity could suggest, and his regard for the softer sex, by appropriating one of the best and most interesting of them in the fidelity of the tenderest relation. We have imagined him employing the time which other young men of rank and spirit gave to dissipation, in a strenuous prosecution of moral and political studies; and yet mingling so far with men of various classes, as to know intimately of what materials society and governments are composed. We have imagined him as presenting himself at length on the public scene, with an air and a step analogous and rival to the aspect and sinew of the most powerful combatant that ever entered the field of Olympia.

At this entrance on public action, we have viewed him solemnly determining to make absolute principle the sole rule of his conduct in every instance, to the last sentence he should speak or write on public affairs; to give no pledges, and make no concessions, to any party whatever; to expose and prosecute, with the same unrelenting justice, the generally equal corruption of ministries and oppositions; to cooperate with any party in the particular case in which he should judge it in the right, and in all other cases to protest impartially against them all; and to say the whole truth, when other pretended friends of public virtue and the people durst only to say the half, for fear of provoking an examination of their own conduct, or for fear of absolutely shutting the door against all chance of future advancement. We view him holding up to contempt the artifices and intrigues of statesmen, and hated abundantly for his pains, no doubt, but never in danger of a retaliation of exposure. He would not have submitted to be found in the society of even the very highest persons in the state, on any other terms of intercourse than those of virtue and wisdom; he would have felt it a duty peculiarly sacred and cogent to make his most animated efforts to counteract any corruption which he might perceive finding its way into such society, and if those efforts failed, to withdraw himself so entirely as to be clear of all shadow of responsibility. Virtue of this quality would be in little hazard of afflicting

any government with a violent impatience to have the man for a coadjutor, and therefore our imagination never placed him oftener or longer in any of the high offices of state, than about such a space as Fox was actually so privileged; indeed a considerably shorter time, for even had it been possible that any set of men would have acceded at first to such conditions of coalition as he would have insisted on, there could hardly have failed to arise, in the course of a month or two, some question on which this high and inflexible virtue must have dissented so totally, and opposed so strenuously, as to have necessitated, on the one part or the other, a relinquishment of office; and it could not be doubtful one instant on which part this surrender must take place, when the alternative lay between a man of pure virtue and the ordinary tribe of statesmen. But office would not have been requisite to the influence of such a heroic and eloquent patriot. Our imagination has represented him as not only maintaining, in the public council of the nation, the cause of justice in all its parts, sometimes with the support of other men of talents, and sometimes without it, but also as feeling that his public duty extended much beyond all the efforts he could make in that place. As it is absurd to expect integrity in a government, while the people are too ignorant or too inattentive to form any right judgment of its proceedings, and as no person in the whole country would have been so qualified to present before it simple and comprehensive illustrations of its situation and interests, or would indeed have been a tenth part so much attended to, we have imagined him publishing from time to time instructions to the people, in the form of large tracts, stating, with all his unequalled clearness and comprehension, the duties of the people with respect to the conduct of government, and the nature and tendency of the important questions and measures of the times, with an anxious and reiterated effort to impart just views on the general topics of political science, such as the rights of the people, the foundation of the authority of governments, the principles of taxation, and peace and war. If these great duties allowed any time for the more formal schemes of literary performance, he might have taken up some period of the English or any other history, which afforded the best

occasions for illustrating the most interesting points of political truth, and forming a set of permanent national lessons. But we could almost have regretted to see him so engaged, since very often the ascertaining of some very inconsiderable fact, or the unravelling of some perplexity, which, though of consequence possibly to the completeness of the history, is not of the smallest importance to its use, must have consumed the labour and time which might have produced a powerful illustration of some subject immediately momentous to the public welfare, and prevented more mischief than all histories of England ever did good.

During this whole career, the favourite of our imagination keeps far aloof from all personal turpitude; and Howard was just as capable of insulting misery, or John de Witt of carrying on a paltry intrigue, or Eustace St. Pierre of betraying his fellow-citizens, as our statesman of mingling with the basest refuse of human nature at Newmarket and the gambling house, not to mention houses of any other description. We should have suspected ourselves of some feverish dream or transient delirium, if our fancy had ever dared so monstrous a representation, as that of the eloquence which could fascinate and enlighten every tender and every intelligent friend, and influence senates whose decrees would influence the destinies of the world, expending itself in discussions with jockeys, and debates with black-legs; of the intellect which could hold the balance of national contests, or devise schemes for the benefit of all mankind, racked with calculations on dice and cards; of the vehement accuser of public prodigality transferring thousands upon thousands, at the cast of these dice and cards, to wretches who deserve to be cauterized out of the body politic, without making, at the same time, any very careful inquiry, whether the claims of all his industrious tradesmen had been satisfied. If the virtue of other statesmen and patriots was found melting away in the arms of wantons, or suffocated with the fumes of wine, or reduced to that last consummation of dishonour, a subscription of friends to repair a fortune dissipated in the most ignoble uses, our patriot would have been incensed that such men should presume to make speeches against corruption, and profane the name of public virtue.

If, in pursuing his career to a conclusion, we placed him in office towards the close of his life, we beheld him most earnest, we will say devoutly earnest, to render the last part of his course more useful than all that had preceded, by a bold application of those principles which he had maintained through life, to the purposes in which alone they can be of any use, the practical schemes of reform; and if he found it impossible to effect or even to propose, those reforms he had so many thousand times averred to be essential to the safety of the state, indignantly abandoning, before death summoned him, all concern in political office, with an honest, and public, and very loud declaration of its incurable corruption. In virtue of the privilege belonging to all creators of fictitious personages, we should certainly have invoked death to a premature removal of our favourite, if we could have fancied the remotest possibility that he might, in the last, and what ought to be the most illustrious period of his life, sink into the silent witness of aggravated and rapidly progressive corruptions, the approver of oppressive taxes on people of slender means, and the eloquent defender of sinecures held by lords. But we could not suffer the thought, that the personage whose course we had followed through every triumph of virtue, could at last, for the sake of a few sickly months of office, deny his degraded country the consolation of being able to cite, after he was gone, the name of one consistent and unconquerable patriot at least, in contrast to the legion of domestic spoilers and betrayers; or refuse himself the laurels which were ready to be conferred on him by the hand of death: no, we beheld him retaining to the last stage, the same decisive rectitude which ennobled all the preceding; and after humbly committing himself to the Divine mercy, in the prospect of soon removing to a state for which no tumults of public life had ever been suffered to interrupt his anxious preparation, realizing what the poet predicted of a former statesman,

“Oh, save my country, Heaven! shall be thy last.”

How pensive has been the sentiment with which we have said, all this is no more than *what Fox might have been*; nor has this feeling been in the least beguiled by the splendour of all the eulogiums, by the fragrance of all the incense,

conferred and offered since his death. His name stands conspicuous on the list of those, who have failed to accomplish the commission on which their wonderful endowments would seem to tell that they had been sent to the world, by the Master of human and all other spirits. It is thus that mankind are doomed to see a succession of individuals rising among them, with capacities for rendering them the most inestimable services, but faithless, for the most part, to their high vocation, and either never attempting the generous labours which invite their talents, or combining with these labours the vices which frustrate their efficacy. Our late distinguished statesman's exertions for the public welfare were really so great, and in many instances, we have no doubt, so well intended, that it is peculiarly painful to behold him defrauding such admirable powers and efforts of their effect, by means of those parts of his conduct in which he sunk to a level with the least respectable of mankind; and we think no man within our memory has given so melancholy an example of this self-counteraction. It is impossible for the friends of our constitution and of human nature not to feel a warm admiration for Fox's exertions, whatever their partial motives and whatever their occasional excesses might be, in vindication of the great principles of liberty, in hostility to the rage for war, and in extirpation of the slave trade. This last abomination, which had gradually lost even on the basest part of the nation, that hold which it had for a while maintained by a delusive notion of policy, and was fast sinking under the hatred of all that could pretend to humanity or decency, was destined ultimately to fall by his hand, at a period so nearly contemporary with the end of his career, as to give the remembrance of his death somewhat of a similar advantage of association to that, by which the death of the Hebrew champion is always recollected in connexion with the fall of Dagon's temple. A great object was accomplished, and it is fair to attribute the event, in no small degree, to his persevering support of that most estimable individual who was the leader of the design: but as to his immense display of talent on the wide ground of general politics, on the theory of true freedom, and popular rights; on the great and increasing influence of the crown; on the corruption and reform of public institutions;

on severe investigation of public expenditure; on the national vigilance proper to be exercised over the conduct of government; and on the right of any nation to change, when it judges necessary, both the persons and the form of its government; we have observed with the deepest mortification, times without number, the very slight and transient effect on the public mind of a more argumentative and luminous eloquence, than probably we are ever again to see irradiating those subjects, and urging their importance. Both principles and practices, tending toward arbitrary power and national degradation, were progressively gaining ground during the much greater part of the time that he was assaulting them with fire and sword; and the people, notwithstanding it was their own cause that he was maintaining by this persevering warfare, though they were amused indeed with his exploits, could hardly be induced to regard him otherwise than as a capital prize-fighter, and scarcely thanked him for the fortitude and energy which he devoted to their service. He was allowed to be a most admirable man for a leader of opposition, but not a mortal could be persuaded to regard that opposition, even in his hands, as bearing any resemblance to that which we have been accustomed to ascribe to Cato, an opposition of which pure virtue was the motive, and all corruptions whatever the object. If the very same things which were said by Fox, had been advanced by the person whose imaginary character we have sketched in the preceding pages, they would have become the oracles of the people from Berwick to Land's End; corrupters and intriguers would have felt an impression of awe when he rose to speak; no political doctors or nostrums could have cured their nerves of a strange vibration at the sound of his words—a vibration very apt to reach into their consciences or their fears; there would have been something mysterious and appalling in his voice, a sound as if a multitude of voices articulated in one; and though his countenance should have looked as candid and friendly as Fox's did, these gentlemen would have been sometimes subject to certain fretful, peevish lapses of imagination much like those in which Macbeth saw the apparition of Banquo, and would have involuntarily apostrophized him as the dreaded agent of detection and retribution. They

would have felt themselves in the presence of their master, for they would have been taught to recognize, in this one man, the most real representative of the people, whose *will* would generally be soon declared as substantially identical with his *opinions*.

How then did it come to pass, that Fox had no such influence on the national mind, or on the government? The answer is perfectly obvious, and it forms a very serious admonition to all patriots who really wish to promote the welfare of the people, by an opposition to corruptions of the state. The talents, and the long and animated exertions, of the most eloquent of all our countrymen failed, plainly because the people placed no confidence in his virtue, or in other words because they would never be persuaded to attribute virtue to his character.

A signal notoriety of dissipation accompanied the outset of his public career. While the political party which he opposed might be very reasonably astonished that the engagements of the turf, of the bagnio, and of the sanctuaries dedicated to the enshrined and associated imp of chance and fraud, should seem to divert no part of the energy with which they were attacked in their quarters at St. Stephen's, and while the tribes of bloods, bucks, rakes, and other worthy denominations and fraternities might be proud to have for their leader a genius, who could at the same time beat so many grey-beards of the state on their own ground, the sober part of the nation deplored or despised, according to the more generous or more cynical character of the individuals, the splendid talent which could degrade itself to so much folly and immorality. Too great a share of the same fatal reputation attended the distinguished statesman, with whatever truth, during the much greater part of his life. We say, with whatever truth; for we know no more of his private history than what has been without contradiction circulated in the talk and the printed chronicles of scandal; with exaggerations and fictions, no doubt; but no public man can have such a reputation without having substantially such a character. And by a law, as deep in human nature as any of its principles of distinction between good and evil, it is impossible to give respect or confidence to a man who habitually disregards some of the primary ordinances of

morality. The nation never confided in our eloquent statesman's integrity; those who admired every thing in his talents, and much in his qualities, regretted that his name never ceased to excite in their minds the idea of gamblers and bacchanals, even after he was acknowledged to have withdrawn himself from such society. Those who held his opinions, were almost sorry that he should have held them, while they saw with what malicious exultation they who rejected them could cite his moral reputation, in place of argument, to invalidate them. In describing this unfortunate effect of the character, we are simply asserting known matter of fact. There is not one advocate of the principles or of the man, who has not to confess what irksome and silencing rebuffs he has experienced in the form of reference to moral character; we have observed it continually for many years, in every part of England which we have frequented; and we have seen practical and most palpable proof, that no man, even of the highest talents, can ever acquire, or at least retain, much influence on the public mind in the character of remonstrant and reformer, without the reality, or at any rate the invulnerable reputation, of virtue, in the comprehensive sense of the word, as comprising every kind of morality prescribed by the highest moral code acknowledged in a Christian nation. Public men and oppositionists may inveigh against abuses, and parade in patriotism, as long as they please; they will find that even one manifest vice will preclude all public confidence in their principles, and therefore render futile the strongest exertions of talent; a slight flaw in otherwise the best tempered blade of Toledo, will soon expose the baffled wight that wields it to either the scorn or pity of the spectators, and to the victorious arm of his antagonist. It has possibly been said, that a man may maintain nice principles of integrity in the prosecution of public affairs, though his conscience and practice are very defective in matters of private morality. But this would never be believed, even if it were true: the universal conviction of mankind rejects it when it is attempted, in practical cases, to be made the foundation of confidence. So far is this from being believed, that even a conspicuous and complete reformation of private morals if it be but recent, is still an unsatisfactory security

for public virtue; and a very long probation of personal character is indispensable, as a kind of quarantine for a man once deeply contaminated to undergo, in order to engage any real confidence in the integrity of his public conduct; nor can he ever engage it in the same degree, as if a uniform and resolute virtue had marked his private conduct from the beginning. But even if it were admitted, that all the virtues of the statesman might flourish in spite of the vices of the man, it would have been of no use, as an argument for confidence in the integrity of Fox's principles as a statesman, after the indelible stigma which they received in the famous coalition with Lord North. In what degree that portion of the people, that approved Fox's political opinions, really confided in his integrity as a firm and consistent statesman, was strongly brought to the proof, at the time of his appointment as one of the principals of the late administration. His admirers in general expressed their expectations in terms of great reserve; they rather wished, than absolutely dared to believe, that it was impossible he should not prefer a fidelity to those great principles and plans of extensive reform, which he had so strenuously inculcated, to any office or associates in office that should require the sacrifice of those plans, and that he would not surely have taken a high official station, without some stipulations for carrying them, at least partially, into effect. But they recollected the tenor of his life; and though they were somewhat disappointed, and deeply grieved, to find him at his very entrance on office proposing and defending one of the rankest abuses, and afterwards inviolably keeping the peace with the grand total of abuses, in both the domestic and the Indian government, they did, at least many of them, confess, that they had always trembled for the consequence of bringing to such an ordeal a political integrity which, while they had sometimes for a moment almost half-believed in it, they had always been obliged to refer to some far different principle from a firm personal morality, supported by a religious conscience.

We have remarked on the slight hold which our great actor had on the mind of the nation at large; it was mortifying also to observe, how little ascendancy his prodigious powers maintained over the minds of senators and ministers.

It was irksome to witness that air of easy indifference, with which his most poignant reproaches were listened to; that readiness of reply to his nervous representations of the calamities or injustice of war; the carelessness often manifested while he was depicting the distresses of the people: and the impudent gaiety and sprightliness with which arrant corruption could show, and defend, and applaud itself in his presence. It is not for us to pretend to judge of what materials ministers and senators are composed; but we did often think, that if eloquence of such intensity, and so directed, had been corroborated in its impetus by the authoritative force which severe virtue can give to the stroke of talent, some of them would have been repressed into a very different kind of feeling and manners from those which we had the mortification to behold: we did think that, a man thus armed at once with the spear and the ægis, might have caused it to be felt, by stress of dire compulsion, "How awful goodness is."

On the whole, we shall always regard Fox as a memorable and mournful example of a gigantic agent, at once determined to labour for the public, and dooming himself to labour almost in vain. Our estimate of his talents precludes all hope or fear of any second example of such powerful labours, or such humiliating failure of effect. We wish the greatest genius on earth, whoever he may be, might write an inscription for our eminent statesman's monument to express, in the most strenuous of all possible modes of thought and phrase, the truth and the warning, that no man will ever be accepted to serve mankind in the highest departments of utility, without an eminence of virtue that can sustain him in the noble defiance—Which of you convicts me of sin?

We can see that a good life of Fox will never be given to the public. If his biography is written by any of his intimate friends, who alone possess competent materials, they will suppress, and may even be excused on the ground of affection and propriety for suppressing, many things which are of the very vitality of the character. The historian of such a man ought to be at once knowing, philosophical, and impressed with the principles of religion; and it may easily be guessed whether such a writer is likely to be found, or if

he were found, to be put in 'possession of all the requisite information. We must notice a sentence in Lord Holland's preface (p. xlv.):—

"It is true, that at the melancholy period of his death, advantage was taken of the interest excited by all that concerned him, to impose upon the public a variety of memoirs and anecdotes (in the form of pamphlets), as unfounded in fact, as they were painful to his friends and injurious to his memory. The confident pretensions with which many of those publications were ushered into the world, may have given them some little circulation at the time. but the internal evidence of their falsehood was sufficiently strong to counteract any impression which their contents might be calculated to produce. It is not therefore with a view of exposing such misrepresentation, that any authentic account of the life of Mr. Fox can be deemed necessary."

His Lordship is quite mistaken. These publications have produced a permanent effect on the generality of their readers. They may not indeed implicitly believe every particular these pamphlets contain, but there is not one reader in twenty that doubts of their being mainly true. How should the case be otherwise? Persons remote from the sphere of Mr. Fox's acquaintance, can detect no internal evidence of falsehood. They have all heard anecdotes, which they have never heard contradicted, of his earlier habits, adventures, companions, and places of resort; and when they are furnished with a large addition of what seems to them quite of a piece with what they have heard or read before, how are they to perceive any internal evidence of falsehood? or who can blame them for believing straight forward, if there be no contradiction between one part of the production they are reading and another, and no material contradiction between the several productions they happen to meet with? The substance of these pamphlets is so settled in the minds of the great majority of their readers, as the true history and character of Mr. Fox, that a formal work from one of his friends would have no small difficulty in displacing the belief: They will judge, however, whether they ought not to attempt it, and whether justice to him be not a superior consideration to any points of delicacy relating to his surviving associates or opponents in political concerns.

"Telling the story of those times," was Mr. Fox's description of history. But if we try, by a strong effort of imagination, to carry ourselves back to any given period of past times, and if we take back along with us the history which professes to tell the story, it will be striking to consider how little it is in the power of history to perform. Let our country be the scene and any past age the time. That country at the time, perhaps, contained seven or eight millions of human beings. Each one of these had his employments, interests, and schemes, his pleasures and sufferings, his accidents and adventures, his youth and the changes of advancing life; and these pleasurable and painful interests had an infinite importance to the individual whose thoughts they filled, and whose heart they elated or afflicted. Of this immense crowd, and all their distinct, their anxious, and, in their own view, eventful courses of life, history knows nothing. Incalculable thousands, therefore, and tens of thousands, of emotions of joy and agony, of ardent hopes, of romantic schemes, of interesting disclosures, of striking dialogues, of strange incidents, of deep-laid plots, of fatal catastrophes, of scenes of death, that have had their place and their hour, that have been to certain human creatures the most important circumstances in the world at the time, and collectively have constituted the real state of the people, could not be saved, and cannot be redeemed, from sinking into oblivion. This vast crowd of beings have lived in the social and yet separating economy of families, and thus have been under an infinite number of distinct polities, each of which have experienced innumerable fluctuations, as to agreement or discord, as to resources, number, cultivation, relative sorrows or satisfaction, and intercourse, alliances, or quarrels, with the neighbouring little domestic states. All this, too, though constituting at all times so great a part of the moral condition of the good and evil of the community, is incapable of being brought within the cognizance of history. There are larger subdivisions of the nation, yet still so small as to be very numerous, into the inhabitants of villages and towns, with all the local interests and events of each; and even these are for the most part invisible in the narrow sketch of the history of a nation. We may add all the train of events and interests connected

with religious associations, with the different employments of the people, with civil and literary professions, and with all the departments of studious life, together with the lighter, but both characteristic and influential course of amusements and fashions.

No one ever wished to see the world so literally filled with books as to leave no room for the grass and corn to grow, nor therefore regretted that a host of writers of superhuman knowledge and faculty had not been appointed to record all the things interesting to individuals, or families, or districts, that have been done or said in a whole nation during centuries; but it is at the same time to be acknowledged, that nothing really deserving to be called a history of a nation can be written, unless the historian could exhibit something that should be a true and correct miniature of what has thus been an almost boundless assemblage of moral being and agency. He must, in description, reduce this vast assemblage of particulars to some general abstract, which shall give the true measures of all the kinds of good and evil that have existed in a whole nation at the assigned period; and he must contrive some mode of narration that shall relate, as one course of action, the whole agency of millions of separate, and diversified, and often mutually opposing agents. But how is all this to be done? The historian does not know a ten-thousandth part of all those facts of good and evil among individuals the collective amount of which formed the moral character and condition of any people during any given period, and which collective amount he is required to ascertain as he proceeds, and to give in a continued abstract; nor, indeed, if he could know so vast an assemblage, would it be possible for him so to combine and compare all these things together, as to make any true abstract and estimate of the whole; nor if he could make such a summary estimate, would it be of any material value, as thus divested of all particular appropriation to individuals, and given as the description of the character and state of an imaginary being called a nation. A nation having one character and condition, and acting as one being, is but an idle fiction after all; since in plain fact it is as individuals that men are good or evil, are in pain or miserable, and are engaged in an infinite diversity

of action, and not as constituent particles of some multitudinous monster.

What is it, then, that a work professing to be the history of a nation actually does? What it does is precisely this: it devotes itself to a dozen or two of the most distinguished persons of the times of which it professes to relate the story; and because the stations and actions of those persons much affected the state and affairs of the nation, frequent notice is taken of the people in the way of illustrating the conduct of those principal persons. The natural order would seem to be, that the people, consisting of so many millions of living and rational beings, should form throughout the grand object; and that the actions of these leading individuals, who by the very nature of the case will occupy, after the historian's best efforts to reduce their factitious importance, a very disproportionate share of attention, should be narrated as tending to explain, and for the purpose of explaining the state of the nation, and the changes in its character and affairs. It might be presumed that the happiness or calamities, the civilization or barbarism, the tranquillity or commotions, of a large assembled portion of the human race, is a much more considerable object of interest than the mere names, characters, and proceedings of about as many men as might be conveyed in a common stage-waggon; and that the writer, who is making records of that nation, should be much more anxious, both to illustrate whatever in its condition and qualities was quite independent of these chief persons, and to elucidate the effect, on the popular condition, of the actions of these persons, than just to relate that these particular persons acted in that particular manner, and then call this a history of the nation. But this latter is obviously the mode in almost all the works professing to be national histories. Throughout the work the nation appears as a large mass of material, which a very few persons in succession have inherited, or bought, or stolen, and on which they have amused themselves with all manner of experiments. Some of them have chosen to cast it into one kind of polity, and others into another; and sometimes rival proprietors have quarrelled about it, and between them dashed and battered it out of every regular form, wasting and destroy-

ing it, as men will often do in quarrelling about what each of them professes to deem very valuable, by tossing large pieces of it at each other's heads. And all the while the relator of the fray views this material in no other light than that of the question which of the two has the most right to it, and which of them shows the most strength, dexterity, or determination, in employing it in the battle. If it is at one time moulded into a fair and majestic form, it is regarded purely as showing the hand of the artist; if at the next turn it is again reduced to a mass, and thrown into some loathsome shape, it is no further a matter of concern than to marvel at the strange taste of the sovereign political potter. In plain terms, history takes no further account of the great mass of a nation or of mankind than as a mere appendage to a few individuals, and serving them in the capacity of a mechanical implement for labour, the passive subject of experiments in legislation, the deluded partisan of faction, and the general's disposable, that is consumable, force for war. The story of this great mass is briefly told, not for its own sake, but merely as a part of the story of the chiefs, and in a manner which indicates that the interests of the million were quite of secondary account in the historian's view to those of the individual. The histories of nations, therefore, are not what they pretend, and are commonly taken to be: history pretends to be the same thing to the *time* of a nation that geography is to the local *space* that it inhabits; but a traveller that has just gone along a few of the great roads of a country and visited its chief towns, might just as properly call a sketch and a map of this journey a geographical survey of the country, as any of our national histories can pretend to be a satisfactory view of the state of a people through a course of ages.

It may indeed be alleged that the grand defect in question is in a great degree the inevitable misfortune of history, from the very nature of things, which makes it impossible for the historian to do more than record the actions of a few conspicuous men. We acknowledge this to be partly true; and have only to observe that history therefore, from the narrowness of its scope, is of vastly less value as a revealer of human nature and a teacher of moral principles, than it has been commonly and pompously represented to be.

Exclusive of mere facts, the only truths that history peculiarly illustrates are few and obvious. It were needless to mention the most conspicuous of its demonstrations, the stupendous depravity of our nature; the whole of the interesting fragment before us, for instance, contains absolutely nothing but an account of follies and crimes, except indeed the heroic conduct of some persons who perished for opposing them. The more specific truths illustrated appear to be these: the invariable tendency of governments to become despotic, the universal disposition of nations to allow them to become so, the extreme hazard to liberty when sought by revolutions effected by arms; and the infinite mischief of religious intolerance, and of all such measures of the state as naturally tend to create it, and give it an organized force and operation.

A rigid adherence to Mr. Fox's theory (it is not so much his practice) of historical composition, would still more contract its scope and diminish its value. Lord Holland has explained this theory.

"It is indeed probable, that his difficulties on this occasion were greater than any other modern historian would have had to encounter. I have mentioned them more particularly, because they in some measure arose from his scrupulous attention to certain notions he entertained on the nature of an historical composition. If indeed the work were finished, the nature of his design would be best collected from the execution of it; but as it is unfortunately in an incomplete and unfinished state, his conception of the duties of an historian may very possibly be misunderstood. The consequence would be, that some passages, which, according to modern taste, must be called peculiarities, might, with superficial critics, pass for defects which he had overlooked, or imperfections which he intended to correct. It is therefore necessary to observe, that he had formed his plan so exclusively on the model of ancient writers, that he not only felt some repugnance to the modern practice of notes, but he thought that all which an historian wished to say, should be introduced as part of a continued narration, and never assume the appearance of a digression, much less of a dissertation annexed to it. From the period therefore that he closed his introductory chapter, he defined his duty as an author to consist in recounting the facts as they arose, or in his simple and forcible language, *in telling the story of those times*. A conversation which passed on the subject of the literature of the age of James II.

proves his rigid adherence to these ideas, and perhaps the substance of it may serve to illustrate and explain them. In speaking of the writers of that period, he lamented that he had not devised a method of interweaving any account of them or their works, much less any criticism on their style, into his history. On my suggesting the example of Hume and Voltaire, who had discussed such topics at some length, either at the end of each reign, or in a separate chapter, he observed, with much commendation of the execution of it, that such a contrivance might be a good mode of writing critical essays, but that it was in his opinion incompatible with the nature of his undertaking; which, if it ceased to be a narration, ceased to be a history. Such restraints assuredly operated as taxes upon his ingenuity, and added to that labour, which the observance of his general laws of composition rendered sufficiently great. On the rules of writing he had reflected much and deeply. His own habits naturally led him to compare them with those of public speaking, and the different and even opposite principles upon which excellence is to be attained in these two great arts, were no unusual topics of his conversation."—Preface, pp. 35—38.

The obvious question here is, how history could ever come to have such a specific nature. According to this representation, history might be a thing as defined as a species of animal or vegetable, which must absolutely have always a certain number of precise attributes, and could not have more or less without becoming a monster. But by what sovereign authority was its organization thus definitively fixed, and where are we to look for its pure original type? And even if there were such an original definition and type, and if according to that authority nothing but a continuous narration should be entitled to the designation of history, of what trifling consequence it would be that this name should be refused to a work that luminously narrated events, that made intervals in this narration, and filled them with eloquent, appropriate reflections, and profound reasonings, adapted to make the narration of facts both more striking and more instructive. The writer of such a work might say—I do not care whether you allow my work to be called a history or not; even keep the insignificant term, if you will, sacred to the dry narrator, who has not understanding enough to make important reflections as he goes along. It is on account of the eloquence and reasoning in my work that the name of history is denied it, I have only

to say that I have then written something better than history.

History as an art is no more bound up by technical and exclusive laws than oratory or poetry. It is just any mode of narration in which any man chooses to relate to other men a series of facts. It may be written as a mere chronicle, or in a continuous and artfully arranged relation without reflections, or in a narration moderately interspersed with short observations, which cause but a momentary interruption of the story, or in a form admitting such frequent and huge dissertations as to become in some sense a course of historical lectures. These various methods of bringing back the past to view, are adapted to the various kinds of inquisitiveness with which men seek a knowledge of the past. A few may be content with the bare knowledge that certain things happened at certain times: many wish to have the events adjusted into an order which shall exhibit their connexion from the beginning to the end, some wish to comprehend the causes and tendencies of events, as well as to be apprized of any remarkable contemporary circumstances, or distinguished men, that without being directly involved in the train of events, had any relation with any stage of them, and a few are even desirous of formal deductions of moral and political doctrines. Excepting perhaps the first of these modes, it would be idle exclusively to appropriate or refuse the denomination of history to any one of them; and especially to refuse the title, if it is deemed a title of dignified import, to such a mode of recording the events of past ages as should tend to explain the causes and various relations, and to enforce whatever important instructions they are capable of being made to yield to the readers; for surely the highest office that history can pretend to execute is that of raising on ages of the dead a tribute of instruction for the living. We have already said that the wisdom derivable from history is not very copious: but as far as may be, it should seem to be the business of history to collect all the little streams of valuable instruction in the distant regions of time (as the rills and rivulets among the remote mountains of Africa are drawn by successive confluence to form the Nile), and bring them down in one fertilizing current on the lower ages.

To say that the ancient historians confined themselves to a straightforward, unbroken course of narration, is just the same thing, with respect to its authority in directing our practice, as to say they built their houses or shaped their clothes in this or that particular way; we have always an appeal to the nature and reason of the thing. And we have also an appeal to universal colloquial practice, which may be assumed to be substantially the model for all communications that are to be made from one human being to another by written words. If a man were relating to us any interesting train of actions or events of which he had been a witness, or had received his information from witnesses, we should expect him often to interrupt his narration with explanatory remarks at least; and if he were a very intelligent man, we should be delighted to hear him make observations tending to establish important general truths from the facts related. We should positively compel him to do something of this; for we should just as much think of giving the lie to all he said, as of suffering him to go on an hour without raising some questions, both of fact and of general speculation. And we do not comprehend how written history can be under any law, unless some dictum of pedantry, to forbid it to imitate in a moderate degree what is so natural and so rational in a narration made personally by a judicious man to intelligent companions.

Besides the information of the distinguished statesman's opinions on historical composition, the preface contains various interesting particulars of his habits and studies. It appears that his feelings were so far from being totally absorbed by ambition, that his mental resources were so great, and his susceptibility of interest so lively and versatile, that in the intervals of his most vehement public exertions, and during the season in which he seceded in a great measure from the political warfare, he enjoyed exquisitely the pleasures of elegant literature and rural nature. It is no less pleasing than it is unusual and wonderful, to see the simple and cordial feelings of the human being, and the taste of the man of letters, thus preserving their existence amidst the artificial interests and the tumults of a statesman's life, and unfolding themselves with equal vigour in every season of retreat from the political sphere.

With a true philanthropist, however, it will be a question of conscience how far he may innocently surrender himself even to the refined gratifications of imagination and taste, while sensible that very important interests may be depending on his more or less continued prosecution of the rougher exercises of political argument. There is no preserving patience to hear a man like Mr. Fox, and in such a period as that he lived in, talk of employing himself in preparing an edition of Dryden's works; an occupation in which he might consume, in settling the propriety of some couple of poetical epithets, just as much time as would have sufficed for preparing the outlines of a speech on the subject of parliamentary reform. It would be a fine thing, indeed, to see the great statesman solemnly weighing the merits of the meaning of some awkward line, which the poet perhaps wrote half asleep, when driven to finish the "tale" of verses which some Pharaoh of a bookseller had two or three times sent his imps to demand, for money paid, and perhaps spent in the wine that had imparted the cast of somnolency to the verse in question. Nor is it solely on the ground of his possible public usefulness, that we feel some want of complacency in hearing him exclaim, "Oh, how I wish that I could make up my mind to think it right, to devote all the remaining part of my life to such subjects, and such only!" It will suggest itself that toward the close of his life there might be, setting out of the question too any labours due to the public, some other things proper to be thought of, besides the vindication of Racine's poetical merits, and the chastisement of Dryden and others who had not done them justice. Notwithstanding, if all duties and services of stronger claim could have been first discharged, it would have been very gratifying to have received from him that projected treatise on Poetry, History, and Oratory, on the subject of which Lord Holland speaks.

Many persons will be surprised to be informed that Mr. Fox was slow in composition; and this inconvenience was increased by his extreme solicitude to keep his page clear of any trace of his *trade*, as he should seem to have regarded it, of public speaking. From this solicitude he refused admittance, by Lord Holland's account, to many expressions and sentiments which in a speech would have been eloquent.

This will be deemed an unfortunate and injurious fastidiousness in our great orator; for the consequence is, that we by no means find in the writing the whole mental power we know there was in the man. There is a certain bareness, and almost coldness, of style, from which a reader, not otherwise acquainted with the force of his talents, would never learn the irresistible power of his eloquence: in passing along the pages of the work before us, we earnestly, and too often vainly, long for some of those mighty emanations of sentiment which used to set us on fire in hearing him. It were strange indeed, if he considered these living fires as something of too professional and vulgar a kind, to be allowed to impart their animation to history. It were strange if history, because its subjects are chiefly dead men, should be required to preserve a kind of analogy with their skeletons, and be cold, and dry, and still, like them. It is certainly the office of history to show us "a valley of dry bones;" but it interests us most by the energy which transforms the whole scene into life.

Many pages of Lord Holland's preface are occupied with a very curious account of the fate of King James's manuscripts, deposited in the Scotch College at Paris. Mr. Fox's inquiries fully ascertained that they were destroyed during the late revolution.

The period of our history, selected by Mr. Fox, was evidently adapted for what was of course his purpose, to illustrate the nature and basis, and the whole progress of the attainment, of that political freedom which this country since the Revolution of 1688 has enjoyed, notwithstanding many just causes of complaint, in a higher degree than perhaps any other nation of ancient or modern times. The events of that period were of a kind which, contemplated merely as a dramatic scene, containing a certain portion of incident, show, and action (the only view, unfortunately, in which most of us regard history), had in former years rather a strong effect on the imagination, even when we did not take the trouble to think deeply of the political tendency and result. But in this respect the case will be found to be now greatly changed. What has taken place in our own times, has thrown all the transactions of several centuries past, considered as matter of magnificent exhibition, quite into

the shade. It is but very occasionally that the mind catches a momentary sight of the transactions of the times of the Charleses, James, and William, through some opening in the stupendous train of revolutions, wars, abdications, dethronements, conquests, and changing constitutions, which has been moving, and is still rapidly moving, before our eyes. Who will think of going back to trace the adventures of one or two monarchs-errant of former times, when there are whole parties of them up and down Europe, with a sufficient probability of additions to the number? Who will go almost two centuries back to survey a nation risen in arms against a tyrant, though totally ignorant of the true principles of liberty, when they can see such a phenomenon, just springing up in the neighbourhood a few weeks since? The contests of parties in those times, the questions of prerogative, the loyalty of faction leaders, the devising of plans of government, the ravage of armies, the progress of a commander into a despotic monarch, the subsidence of national enthusiasm into the apathy of slaves, are apt to affect us as an old and dull story, at a time when no one cares to buy a map of Europe, or count its kingdoms, or go over the list of its monarchs, or read one page about the nature of its constitutions of government, or ask one sentence about the rival parties in its states, from knowing that a few months may put all such information out of date. On such accounts, as well as from the present indisposition to any study of politics as a science, we have little expectation that the interesting production before us will do more than merely gratify the literary curiosity excited by the name of the great author. The noble spirit of liberty which pervades every part of it, will be flatly offensive to many of his countrymen; and will appear to others as a kind of high-spirited and patriotic romance, proving that the sanguine temperament of the orator of the people wonderfully retained his juvenility of opinion in his more advanced age, in spite of the years and the events that have made *them* wiser.

So much of the volume as Mr. Fox wrote, consists of three chapters, of which the first is called introductory, and contains a brief retrospect of the reign of Charles II., and some of the circumstances of what was named the Commonwealth. The two latter go over about seven months of the

reign of James II., and form the commencement of the intended history, which, if the author had lived and enjoyed leisure, would probably have been brought down to a period lower than the Revolution; it does not appear that his thoughts had decidedly fixed on any precise point of time as the limit.

It was not to be expected that any singular novelty either of fact or doctrine should be brought out, in the review of a period so often subject to research and controversial discussion; but we feel, as we did expect to feel, that we go over the ground with a better light than we have done before. There is a simplicity in the opening out of the involved crowd of characters and affairs, which brings both the individual objects, and their relations to one another, more palpably into our sight. We feel how delightful it is to go through an important and confused scene in the company of such an illuminating mind, and how easily we could surrender ourselves to an almost implicit reliance on its judgment. Connected with this extremely discriminating analysis, and distinct statement of facts, the reader will find every where a more unaffected unlaboured independence of opinion, than in perhaps any other of our historians; the author seems to judge freely, as by a kind of inherent necessity; and he condemns (for indeed this is the duty of his office in almost every page), with an entire indifference to those circumstances to which even historians are often obsequious. He passes sentence on nobles and kings with as little fear, and at the same time in as calm a tone, as the court that summoned, immediately after their death, the monarchs of Egypt. With respect to this calmness, it gives a dignified air to history; yet we will acknowledge that in several instances, in this work, after the indictment and proof of enormous wickedness, we have wished the sentence pronounced with somewhat more emphasis. The mildness of the man, occasionally, a little qualifies in expression the energy of justice; but it only qualifies, it does not pervert it; he most impartially condemns where he ought, and we have only wished, in a few cases, a severer acerbity of language. The criminal charges; however, are made with a fulness and animation which might sometimes perhaps be deemed to prevent the historian from formally pronouncing any judg-

ment, as no expression could be found by which the character of the criminal could be more blasted, than it is already by the statement of the crimes.

If the work had been carried through the whole of the selected period, it would have been an admirable contrast and antidote to the parallel part of Hume's history, in point of honesty of representation. Our author justly accuses Hume of a constant partiality to the cause of the tyrants in his statement and reasonings, and of a base disingenuousness in his observations on the conduct of Charles II. respecting the death of Algernon Sidney; he convicts him of a direct and shameful fabrication of a parliamentary debate in 1685, which debate did not take place, nor anything like it; and he ascribes to him an almost puerile respect for kings, as such. After all this, we own it requires our whole stock of patience to read those extremely respectful and flattering expressions which he seeks every occasion, and once or twice goes much out of his way, to bestow on this historian; expressions which are applied not only to his talents, to which they would be always due, but to his character, to which these articles of accusation, exhibited by his admirer, may prove what sort of moral principles are fairly attributable. The passage relating to the condemnation of Sydney, is a good specimen of our author's decided manner of expressing his opinion, and also of his strange prejudice in favour of Hume's moral qualities.

Was it ever understood, till now, that a man eminent at once for the depth and soundness of his understanding, and the integrity and benevolence of his heart, *can* be an apologist (the full evidence of the nature of the facts being before him), for the foulest murders of a tyrant! Would not that integrity and benevolence of heart have been high in favour at the court of such a tyrant, which should have put in exercise so strong an understanding to preserve his majesty in a state of entire self-complacency while perpetrating the murder of one of the noblest of his subjects and of mankind? As to posthumous infamy, and the retribution to be inflicted by history, we wonder whether such a thing ever *once* occurred to the thoughts of a tyrant, who, in pursuing to death a man of such heroic virtue as to have offended or alarmed him, could spurn every human sympathy, defy the

indignation of all good men, and find a tribe of courtiers, comprising nobles, prelates, and scholars, ever ready to applaud his justice. And if by "conscience" is here meant that sentiment which connects with our actions a reference to a God and a future judgment, it is surely a very hopeful thing, that a man, who can deliberately brave the divine vengeance, should be intimidated from committing a crime, by thinking of the fearful doom which awaits him in the paragraphs of some historian!

In speaking of the fate of Charles I., Mr. Fox, in an argument of great candour and delicacy, disapproves of his execution, on the ground both of justice and policy, but especially the latter. He passes in too much haste over the character of Cromwell, and gives a rather equivocal estimate of it, except indeed as contrasted with that of Washington, whom he takes the occasion, afforded by the partial similarity of the situations of the two men, to celebrate in terms of the highest possible eulogium.

We should hope the notion that good political institutions will be certain of an efficacious operation, by the mere strength of the dead wisdom, if we may so call it, that resides in their construction, independently of the character of the men who are in the administration of them, has lost its influence on the public mind; if not, the following striking lesson ought to contribute to expel such a vain fancy.

"The reign of Charles II. forms one of the most singular, as well as of the most important periods of history. It is the era of good laws and bad government. The abolition of the Court of Wards, the repeal of the writ de Heretico Comburendo, the Triennial Parliament Bill, the establishment of the rights of the House of Commons in regard to impeachment, the expiration of the License Act, and above all, the glorious statute of Habeas Corpus, have therefore induced a modern writer of great eminence to fix the year 1679 as the period at which our constitution had arrived at its greatest theoretical perfection, but he owns, in a short note upon the passage alluded to, that the times immediately following were times of great practical depression. What a field for meditation does this short observation, from such a man, furnish! What reflection does it not suggest to a thinking mind, upon the inefficacy of human laws, and the imperfection of human constitutions! We are called upon to contemplate the progress of our constitution, and

attention is fixed with the most minute accuracy to a particular point, when it is said to have risen to its utmost perfection. Here we are then at the best moment of the best constitution that human wisdom ever framed. What follows? A time of oppression and misery, not arising from external causes, such as war, pestilence, or famine, nor even from any such alteration of the laws as might be supposed to impair this boasted perfection, but from a corrupt and wicked administration, which all the so-much admired checks of our constitution were not able to prevent. How vain, then, how idle, how presumptuous is the opinion that laws can do everything! and how weak and pernicious the maxim founded upon it, that measures, not men, are to be attended to!"—P. 20.

The historian appears to have examined a great deal of evidence on the subject of the pretended Popish plot, as the result of which he gives it as his opinion, that the greater part of those who were concerned in the iniquitous prosecution of the Papists, were rather under the influence of "an extraordinary degree of blind credulity," than guilty of "the deliberate wickedness of planning and assisting in the perpetration of legal murder."

It is most melancholy to contemplate a great nation, which not very long before had been animated, in however rude a manner, and however ill-instructed in political science, with a high spirit of liberty, which had raised its strong arm against the impositions of a monarch who thought it necessary for a governor to be a despot, and had prostrated him and his armies in the dust, submitting at last to the unqualified despotism of a much more odious tyrant. The view is still more mortifying, when we consider that this tyrant had never performed any one great action, and possessed no one virtue under heaven, to palliate even in appearance his depravity, and lessen to the people, the ignominy of being his slaves. But it is most mortifying of all to find that these slaves were beaten and trodden into such fatuity, that they voluntarily abdicated all the rites of both men and brutes, and humbly lauded the master who sported with their privileges, their property, and their blood. No inconsiderable part of this volume consists of descriptions of such national humiliation; and we transcribe a short specimen, immediately following the account of Charles's turning off his last parliament, with

the full resolution never to call another; to "which resolution, indeed, Louis had bound him, as one of the conditions on which he was to receive his stipend,"—

"No measure was ever attended with more complete success. The most flattering addresses poured in from all parts of the kingdom; divine right and indiscriminate obedience were everywhere the favourite doctrines; and men seemed to vie with each other who should have the honour of the greatest share in the glorious work of slavery, by securing to the king, for the present, and, after him, to the duke, absolute and uncontrollable power. They, who, either because Charles had been called a forgiving prince by his flatterers (upon what ground I could never discover), or from some supposed connexion between indolence and good nature, had deceived themselves into a hope that his tyranny would be of the milder sort, found themselves much disappointed in their expectations. The whole history of the remaining part of his reign, exhibits an uninterrupted series of attacks upon the liberty, property, and lives of his subjects."—
P. 43.

The most outrageous operations of Charles's tyranny were carried on in Scotland. This work exhibits, in considerable detail, the horrible system of proscription and murder, which has given him a very reasonable claim to the company, in history or anywhere else, of Tiberius; for so we must be allowed to think, notwithstanding Mr. Fox has taken exception to Burnet's classing these two names together, forgetting that he himself had done the very same thing in an earlier page.

The scene becomes more hateful at every step; till at length we behold one general spectacle of massacre, in which the most infernal riots of cruelty to which military ruffians, fully let loose, could be stimulated, were authorized and applauded by a government, which colleges and dignitaries, and a large and preponderating part of the nation, adored as of divine authority, and really deserved, as a reward of such a faith, the privilege of adoring. It is after viewing such a course of transactions, that we want expressions of somewhat more emphatical reprobation, in closing the account with this wicked monarch, than those, though very strong and comprehensive, which Mr. Fox has used in the concluding delineation of his character. It was very proper to notice his politeness and affability, his facility of

temper, and kindnesses to his mistresses; but we think they should not have been so mentioned, as to have even the slightest appearance of a *set-off* against the malignity of his wickedness and the atrocities of his government.

The manner in which Charles's kindness to his mistresses is mentioned, is a remarkable illustration of the importance of personal morality to a historian, as well as to a statesman.

"His recommendation of the Duchess of Portsmouth and Mrs. Gwyn, upon his death-bed, to his successor, is much to his honour; and they who censure it, seem, in their zeal to show themselves strict moralists, to have suffered their notions of vice and virtue to have fallen into strange confusion. Charles's connexion with those ladies might be vicious, but at a moment when that connexion was upon the point of being finally and irrevocably dissolved, to concern himself about their future welfare, and to recommend them to his brother with earnest tenderness, was virtue. It is not for the interest of morality that the good and evil actions of bad men, should be confounded."—P. 64.

We do not know that any moralist ever forbade a departing criminal to be concerned for the welfare of his surviving companions in guilt, only it would be enjoined that shame and penitence should mingle with this concern; but every moralist will be indignant at this gentle equivocal mode of touching that vice, by which it is notorious that the example of the king contributed to deprave the morals of the nation, as much as his political measures to exterminate its freedom. It is most signally remarkable what a careful silence is maintained, in this work, respecting the state of morals during this reign. Is it then no business of history to take account of such a thing? Even regarding the matter in a political view, is the depravity of a people never to be reckoned among the causes, and the most powerful causes, of their sinking quietly under despotism?

The commencement of James's reign, as far as the work before us has illustrated it, was a mere continuation of the preceding, as James, at his accession, graciously promised his subjects it should. This promise was received with grateful joy by a large proportion of the English nation, and by the governing party even in Scotland, whose fulsome, abominable address of congratulation is given in this work.

Their joy and loyalty were carried to the height of enthusiasm, no doubt, when they found the same infernal work of massacre animated to redoubled activity, and were honoured with the charge of executing an act, which extended to all persons *hearing* conventicle preaching, the punishment of death.

Though James was a papist, Mr. Fox has proved, by the most decisive arguments, that his grand leading object was the establishment of an absolute despotism; and that any designs he might entertain of introducing Popery, would have been kept in reserve till this was accomplished. Meanwhile he much courted the zealous adherents of the Established Church, and he plainly intimated that they had been found the firmest friends of such government, as that of his father, his brother, and himself. It is strange that a man of Mr. Fox's candour should, throughout the book, have contrived to find the very same thing. It surely became him, in the justice of history, to have particularized the many noble efforts made by the churchmen of those times, in resistance of the doctrines and the practices of despotism. He ought to have taken notice of what was so zealously done and written, by ecclesiastical dignitaries, in behalf of liberty of conscience, and in prevention of all persecution for religious opinions and methods of worship.

A large space is occupied with the invasions and proceedings of Monmouth and Argyle. The account of the execution of Monmouth is finely written; but the most interesting part of the whole volume, is the account of the last days and the death of Argyle. We should have transcribed this part, but that we are persuaded it will appear in very many publications, and in every work that shall profess to be a collection of the finest passages in the English language. It is a picture drawn with the happiest simplicity, though with one slight blemish, of one of the most enchanting examples of heroic virtue that history or poetry ever displayed. It is closed with what we felt to be the most eloquent sentence in the whole work.

ON STATESMEN.

Lives of British Statesmen. By JOHN MACDIARMID, Esq.; *Author of an Inquiry into the System of National Defence in Great Britain, and of an Inquiry into the Principles of Subordination.* 4to. 1808.

If we have not learnt to feel for statesmen, as such, a sufficient share of that reverential respect which pronounces their names with awe, which stands amazed at the immensity of their wisdom, which looks up to them as the concentrated reason of the human species, which trembles to insinuate or to hear insinuated against them the slightest suspicion of obliquity of understanding or corruption of moral principle, and which regards it as quite a point of religion to defend their reputation, it has not been that we have not received many grave instructions and rebukes on this head from much better men. A hundred times it has been repeated to us, that a peculiar and extraordinary genius is requisite to constitute a statesman; that men, who by situation and office are conversant with great concerns, acquire a dignity and expansion of mind; that those who can manage the affairs of nations prove themselves by the fact itself to be great men; that their elevated position gives them an incomparably clearer and more comprehensive view of national subjects than is to be attained by us on the low level of private life; that we ought, in deference to them, to repress the presumption of our understandings; that in short it is our duty to applaud or be silent.

With a laudable obsequiousness we have often tried to conform ourselves to our duty, at least as prescribed in the latter part of this alternative; and we have listened respectfully to long panegyrics on the sagacity, fortitude, and disinterestedness of the chief actors and advisers in state affairs, and to inculcations of the gratitude due to men who will thus condescend, in their lofty stations (which at the same time it is presumed they can claim to hold for no other purpose), to toil and care for us the vulgar mass of mankind. Presently these laudatory and hortatory strains would soften into an elegiac plaintiveness, bewailing the

distresses of men in high situations in the state. The pathetic song has deplored the oppressive labours of thought required in forming their schemes, their cruel exposure to the persecutions of an adverse party, the difficulty of preserving harmony of operation in a wide and complex system involving many men and many dispositions, their anxiety in providing for the wants of the state, the frequent failure of their best concerted measures, their sleepless nights, their aching heads, and their sufferings from the ungrateful reproaches of the people. Here our impatience has overcome our good resolutions, and we have been moved to reply. We have said—Is not the remedy for all these sorrows at all times in their reach? They can quit their stations and all the attendant distresses whenever they please, in behalf of other men who are waiting, eager almost to madness, to obtain their share of all the vexations you are commiserating. But while you are so generously deplored the hardships of their situation, they are anxiously devising every possible contrivance to secure themselves in possession of it, and nothing less than the power that put them in can wrench them out. It is vastly reasonable to be requiring lenient judgments on the conduct, and respectful sympathy for the feelings, of public men, while we see with what a violent passion power and station are sought, with what desperate grappling claws of iron they are retained, and with what grief and mortification they are lost. It might be quite time enough, we should think, to commence this strain of tenderness, when in order to fill the places of power and emolument it has become necessary to drag by force retiring virtue and modest talent from private life, and to retain them in those situations by the same compulsion, in spite of the most earnest wishes to retreat, excited by delicacy of conscience, and a disgust at the pomp of state. So long as men are pressing as urgently into the avenues of place and power as ever the gentry rabble of the metropolis have pushed and crowded into the play-house to see the new actor, and so long as a most violent conflict is maintained between those who are in power and those who want to supplant them, we think statesmen form by eminence the class of persons, to whose characters both the contemporary examiner and the historian are not only authorized,

but in duty bound, to administer justice in its utmost rigour, without one particle of extenuation. While forcing their way toward offices in the state, and while maintaining the possession once acquired, they are apprized, or might and should be apprized, of the nature of the responsibility, and it is certain they are extremely well apprized of the privileges. They know that the public welfare depends, in too great a degree, on their conduct, and that the people have a natural instinctive prejudice in favour of their leaders, and are disposed to confide to the utmost extent. They know that a measure of impunity unfortunate for the public is enjoyed by statesmen, their very station affording the means both of concealment and defence for their delinquencies. They know that in point of emolument they are more than paid from the labours of the people for any services they render; and that they are not bestowing any particular favour on the country by holding their offices, as there are plenty of men, about as able and as good as themselves, ready to take their places if they would abdicate them. When to all this is added the acknowledged fact that the majority of this class of men have trifled with their high responsibility, and taken criminal advantage of their privileges, we can have no patience to hear of any claims for a special indulgence of charity, in reading and judging the actions of statesmen.

On the ground of morality in the abstract, separately from any consideration of the effect of his representations, the biographer of statesmen is bound to a very strict application of the rules of justice, since these men constitute, or at least belong to, the uppermost class of the inhabitants of the earth. They have stronger inducements arising from situation, than other men, to be solicitous for the rectitude of their conduct; their station has the utmost advantage for commanding the assistance of whatever illumination a country contains; they see on the large scale the effect of all the grand principles of action; they make laws for the rest of mankind, and they direct the execution of justice. If the eternal laws of morality are to be applied with a soft and lenient hand in the trial and judgment of such an order of men, it will not be worth while to apply them at all to the subordinate classes of mankind; as a morality that

exacts but little where the means and the responsibility are the greatest, would betray itself to contempt by pretending to sit in solemn judgment on the humbler subjects of its authority.* The laws of morality should operate, like those of nature, in the most palpable manner on the largest circumstances.

Another reason for the rigid administration of justice to the characters of men that have been high in the state, is to secure the utility of history, or rather to preserve it from becoming to the last degree immoral and noxious. For since history is almost entirely occupied with the actions of this class of men, and for the much greater part with their vices and their crimes, and the calamitous consequences, it is easy to see that a softened mode of awarding justice to these characters will turn the whole force of history to the effect of depraving our moral principles, by partially conciliating both our feelings and judgments to those hateful courses of action, of which we are already very much too tolerant in consequence of being from our childhood familiarized to the view of them, in every account of the past and present state of the world. And in this way we are inclined to think that history has actually been, on the whole, the enemy of morality. Its readers will have too light an impression of the atrocity of great crimes and great criminals. Great crimes constitute so large a proportion of the historian's materials for constructing splendid exhibitions, that if he does not insensibly become almost partial to them, as a general does to a band of the most cruel savages whose ferocity he has repeatedly employed to obtain his victories, his hatred admits at least a certain softening of literary interest; and in many a glowing description of enormous wickedness, we fancy we see the hand of the painter or poet rather than the moral censor. Artful combinations of odious circumstances, epithets to aggravate each indignant line, eloquence of execration, are possibly not spared; but we still find ourselves rather invited as spectators of a splendid tragedy, than summoned as jurors in a solemn court of justice. The diminution or modification in the historian's mind, of the abhorrence of crimes, in consequence of the benefit which he derives from them as exciting materials for his work, aids the operation of any

cause which may tend to render him indulgent to the actor of them. And often the great criminal has had some one virtue, or at least some very showy faults, adapted, in the historian's view, to relieve and even extenuate the account of his wickedness; he might have munificence, a love of letters, a very lofty kind of ambition, or what a lax morality would term a liberal love of pleasure; at any rate, he probably had talents, and this is perhaps after all the most seductive of the distinctions by which a bad man can dazzle our judgments. The historian, besides, acquires a kind of partiality for an eminent actor in the times and transactions which he describes, from even the circumstance of being, in imagination, so long in his company. In prosecuting his work, he returns to this person each morning, for weeks, months, or even years; the interest of the literary labour consists in following this person through the whole train of his proceedings; the disposition for quarrelling with him gradually subsides; the odious moral features are familiarized to the view; while perhaps the conviction of his great attainments, and the wonder at his achievements, are progressively augmented: extenuations suggest themselves, and occasionally even partial claims on applause; the writer becomes a kind of participator in the activity and importance of the transactions, while he is clear of all the guilt: and thus by degrees the rigour of justice is forgotten, and flagrant iniquity is exhibited with so little prominence of turpitude, that it depends very much on the moral state of the reader's own mind, whether he shall regard it with indulgence or detestation. We shall not wonder at the bad morality of history, if we combine this view of the injurious effect of the historian's studies on his mind, with the consideration that the eminent historians of antiquity were pagans, and the most distinguished ones of modern times very near the moral level of paganism, by means of their irreligion.

It is, again, very desirable that a rigid justice should be maintained in delineating and recording the characters and actions of statesmen, because it is in the nature of the people, in all countries, to feel a kind of superstitious veneration for those who are so much above them as to have the command of their public affairs. Place men, of whom

sort, in power, and there will need no burning fiery furnace to intimidate their fellow-citizens into reverential veneration. On the mere strength of their situation they can gain credit to almost all they pretend, and asking no account of right to all they arrogate; fine talents and fine qualities in abundance shall be ascribed to them; and the crowd shall look up with awe to the beings that can make speeches and enactments, appointments and imposts, treaties and wars. Or even if the deficiency of integrity and abilities is so notorious as to force a reluctant conviction on the people, the high station secures a certain tolerance which a man in humbler life must not too confidently expect for vices and incapacity. It is matter of great difficulty and effort for these men to sin away the whole stock of credit and partiality; which sounding titles and elevated stations have raised for them in the popular mind. Even our pride is in their favour; our pride as respecting ourselves is unwilling to believe, that we are all passing our lives in submissive homage to persons not at all our betters in wisdom or morals; and our pride of national comparison feels it absolutely necessary to maintain, that we are wise enough to put as much wisdom at our head as any people in the world can boast. We mean this as a description not of the English nation in particular; it is the case of every nation.

Now this superstitious respect for persons possessing consequence in the state is injurious to the people in two ways; it deteriorates their moral principles, and it endangers their political condition. If statesmen, as a class, had been proved by experience to be the purest of all men, then this excess of reverence for them might be a most salutary sentiment, as reinforcing the attractions and authority of virtue by all the influence held over our minds by these its noblest examples. But it has been found till now, or at least till very lately, that statesmen in general deem it necessary to keep in their possession about the same quantity of vice as their neighbours; and the respect which the people feel for the men, on account of their station, prevents the just degree of contempt or abhorrence for the vice. All the palliation which vice acquires, as it is held in connexion with respected personages, it is sure

afterwards to retain as viewed in itself; the principles therefore by which its noxiousness should be esteemed are depraved; and all who are disposed to like it, will gladly take the privilege of committing it at the same reduced expense of conscience and character, as their superiors. In every community the estimate of the evil of immorality, in the abstract, will infallibly be reduced nearly to the level of that opinion of its evil which is entertained respecting it, as committed by the most privileged class of that community.

As to the danger which threatens the political condition of the people, no illustration can well make it plainer. If statesmen were an importation of celestials, partaking in no degree of the selfishness and perversity of mortal men, it would be a delightful thing for us to throw into their hands an unlimited power over all the great concerns of a nation, and prosecute our individual purposes, and indulge our tastes and domestic affections, in perfect security that all would go right in the general affairs of the nation. Or if the constitution of things were such, that the interest of the leaders were necessarily coincident entirely with the interest of the people, it might be safe to dismiss the anxiety of vigilance under the presiding direction of even a party of mere human creatures; as the passengers in a ship give themselves very tranquilly to their amusements or their sleep, because they are certain the official conductors of the vessel have necessarily just the same interest in its safety as themselves. But it is obvious that innumerable occasions will present themselves to men in power, of serving their own interests quite distinctly from those of the people, and decidedly to their detriment. Indeed, the personal interests of these men are necessarily opposed to the grand popular interest of freedom itself, insomuch that no people ever long maintained their internal liberty, who did not maintain it by precaution against the very statesmen they were obliged to employ. Every thing that ascertains the freedom of the people necessarily fixes the bounds to the power of those who are placed over them; and it would be requiring too much of human nature to expect that men, whom ambition, for the most part, has raised to the stations of power, should not regard with an evil eye these limitations

to the scope of their predominant passion, and consider them as obstacles which they are to remove or surmount if they can. And their high station, as we have observed, affords them many facilities for concealing and protecting themselves, in the prosecution of measures for the gradual subversion of liberty; in which course and for which purpose very many statesmen, according to the testimony of history, have employed the powers and resources vested, and the confidence reposed in them by the nation, as the persons officially engaged to guard its interests. Now, the thing which beyond all other things would be desired by men with such designs, is the prevalence in the public mind of a blind veneration for statesmen, that attributes to them rectitude and talents of too high an order to be inspected and scrutinized, and controlled by any profane arrogance of the people. Under favour of this state of the popular mind, they have but to make pompous professions of patriotism, and act in tolerable concert, and they may obtain unlimited confidence while they are both wasting the immediate resources of the country, and assiduously sapping away all that which can enable each individual inhabitant to say, I am no man's property or slave. It is the duty, therefore, of all who wish well to mankind, to remonstrate against this pernicious infatuation; and it is our official duty to represent that the biographical flatterers of statesmen are among the most wicked perverters of the public mind.

Mr. Macdiarmid is not of this class. His language is perhaps a little too indulgent, occasionally, to meet our ideas of the severe duties of the office he has chosen; but we regard him on the whole as a faithful and impartial biographer. He never gets into such a current of panegyric that he cannot for his life stop to notice a fault. He appears in a considerable degree the friend of several of the eminent men whose actions he records; but he is such a friend as, if he could have been contemporary and acquainted with any of them, would not have withheld those candid animadversions which might have contributed to make them greater benefactors of the times, and greater ornaments to history. He does not profess to present their characters in any new light, nor to have drawn facts and anecdotes from

rare and unpublished records, but he thought it might not be an unacceptable service to the public to give a somewhat more ample, and a more minute and personal sketch, of these distinguished men, than can be found, or could with propriety be contained, in any one history of their times. Accordingly, he has employed much industry and judgment in deducing, from the information supplied by a number of historical and biographical works, very clear narrations of the lives of Sir Thomas More and Lords Burleigh, Strafford, and Clarendon. The narration is very successful in the point of keeping the individual always fully in view, while it is often necessarily extended, by the public nature of his actions, to the whole breadth of the national history of his times. The writer in general confines himself very strictly to his narration, and is very sparing of reflections; a forbearance practised, no doubt, from the conviction that a narrative written with fidelity, force, and discrimination, might in general be very safely left, from the obvious simplicity of its moral, to the reader's own understanding. It is also a commendable modesty to keep at a great distance from the fault of those historians who might seem to be persuaded that the transactions they record took place positively for no other purpose on earth but to draw forth certain wise notions from their minds. Yet many readers, and we do not disclaim to be of the number, are indolent enough to wish the historian would just give the direction to their thoughts; and if he can manage to time his reflections well, and to avoid being very trite or prolix, we are very willing to divide with him the merit of being very philosophical on every circumstance of the narration. We are not, perhaps, of opinion that Mr. Macdiarmid's reflections would have been more than usually profound; but they would have still further manifested that sound, liberal sense which is already so apparent. The style has quite the measured and equable form of set historical composition; it is, however, perspicuous, unaffected, and in a very respectable degree, vigorous. The book offers a more speedy and elegant introduction than was before attainable, to an acquaintance with four of the most distinguished characters in our political history.

With regard to the first of them, Sir Thomas More, we will acknowledge it must be nearly impossible for the

historian of his life to avoid becoming very decidedly, and even enthusiastically attached to him. No great harm would result from a relaxation, in this instance, of that law of severity under which we have represented that the lives of statesmen ought to be written; for no second instance of the same kind will be found in the subsequent political annals of England. Indeed, he is a person so *unique* in the records of statesmen, that we can see no chance that any utility in the way of example, would arise from a display of his life and character. Some small degree of similarity is pre-requisite, as the basis of any reasonable hope of seeing an example imitated; and therefore it would seem very much in vain, as to this purpose, to display a statesman and courtier who was perfectly free from all ambition, from the beginning of his career to the end; who was brought into office and power by little less than compulsion; who met general flattery and admiration with a calm indifference, and an invariable perception of their vanity; who amidst the caresses of a monarch longed to be with his children; who was the most brilliant and vivacious man in every society he entered into, and yet was more fond of retirement even than other statesmen were anxious for public glare; who displayed a real and cordial hilarity on descending from official eminence to privacy and comparative poverty; who made all other concerns secondary to devotion; and who, with the softest temper and mildest manners, had an inflexibility of principle which never at any moment knew how to hesitate between a sacrifice of conscience and of life. The mind rests on this character with a fascination which most rarely seizes it in passing over the whole surface of history. In this progress we often meet with individuals that we greatly admire; but the bare sentiment of admiration may fail to make us delighted with the ideal society of the object, or interested in its fate. In the company of Sir Thomas More, the admiration scarcely ever stands separate from the more kindly feelings; it seems but to give the last emphasis to the inexpressible complacency with which we listen to him, converse with him, observe his movements, and follow him wherever he goes. If personally acquainted with such a man, we should, in absence from him, be incessantly haunted with a necessity and a passion to get

near him again; and should not only feel the most animated pleasure, but also, in spite of the contrast between our intellectual powers and his, should feel as if we had five times more sense than usual, when stimulated and supported by the vigour of a genius which seemed entirely to forget any comparison between itself and those around, which kindly lent itself to assist every one to think, and gladly aided any one to shine, while it had never once any other ambition than to diffuse happiness or impart instruction. The absence of every kind of selfishness, the matchless gaiety and good humour which accompanied his great talents, and his wonderful facility of using them, divested of the least timidity every one that approached him, except pretenders and villains. His manner of displaying his talents delighted his friends into such a total forgetfulness of fear, that only his exalted virtue could preserve to him that veneration which again his facetiousness prevented from oppressing those who felt it. Perhaps there never was a person that possessed many various qualities in such perfect combination, as, in an equal degree with More, to make the effect of them all be felt in the operation of any one of them. His playful wit never put his severe virtue and his wisdom out of recollection; and at the same time it was acknowledged, that so imperial a virtue had never before been seen so much at its ease in the company of pleasantry and humorous fancy. The habitual influence, therefore, of his character, was a happy and most singular complexity of operation; as he could exert, and did almost involuntarily exert, not in succession and alternation, but at one and the same time, the wit, the philosopher, and the Christian.

Distinguished statesmen generally become what may be called technical characters; the whole human being becomes shaped into an official thing, and nature's own man, with free faculties, and warm sentiments, and unconstrained manners, has disappeared. An established process regulates the creature into a mechanical agency; the order of its manners is squared to the proper model, formed between the smooth complaisance of the courtier, and the assuming self-importance of the minister; the whole train of thinking turns on measures of state, on councils, acts, debates, and

intrigues and the character of the court, the cabinet, and senate, sticks to the being most inseparably, even in the domestic circle, in visits to friends, and in country rambles. In More, on the contrary, the general natural man was always predominant above any artificial character of office. The variety of his interest, the animation of his sentiments, and the strength of his powers, would not suffer affairs of state to repress the living impulses of his mind, or reduce to a formality of action that elasticity which played in all directions with infinite freedom. Even in the transactions of office, it appears that his wit sometimes threw its sparkles through the gravity of the judge. In reading the lives of most other statesmen, we seem to be making a very unmeaning and unentertaining visit, to see them among their secretaries, or going to their councils, or at their levees, or seated in their robes; in reading of More, it seems to be the statesman that makes a visit to us, in the dress of an ordinary person, with manners formed by no rule but kindness and good taste, talking on all subjects, casually suggested, with an easy vigour of sense, and no further reminding us of his station and its habits, than by the surprise now and then recurring on our own minds to recollect that so wonderfully free and pleasant a man is really a great officer of state.

More's character derives some adventitious lustre, from comparison with the persons most conspicuous in the public affairs of England at that time. His being contemporary and intimately connected with Henry VIII., might seem as if intended to show in one view the two extremes of human nature. His modesty and disinterestedness contrast admirably with the proud, insatiable ambition of Wolsey; his independence and magnanimity with the courtly servility which it is impossible not to impute to the otherwise excellent Cranmer.

Amidst the early display and fame of talents and learning, his favourite wish was to become a monk, but was overruled by his father, who was earnest for his adopting the profession of the law. This at length he did, and with the greatest success, notwithstanding he continued to direct a large proportion of his studies to classical literature and to theology. At the age of twenty-three he entered the

House of Commons, in the latter part of the reign of Henry VII., in which situation his first exertion was little less than the hazard of his life, by an eloquent resistance to an iniquitous demand of money, made by this tyrant, and which the fears of the house would have silently yielded but for the courageous virtue of More, which roused them to refuse the grant. He was, however, compelled, in consequence, to exchange the bar for complete retirement; but this only served to complete his knowledge, and mature his virtues, while the tenderest domestic relations occupied his affections, and all the time that could be spared from his studies. He returned to his practice at the accession of Henry VIII., whose favourite, after a little while, he very reluctantly became, and so continued for many years, notwithstanding that lofty integrity which never once made the smallest sacrifice of principle to the will of the monarch. After holding several important situations, he was constrained to accept that of high-chancellor, in which he administered justice with a promptitude and a disinterestedness beyond all former example, till the period of Henry's quarrel with the pope, respecting his divorce of the queen, and his marriage with Anna Boleyn. More foresaw that in his office of chancellor he should be compelled to an explicit opposition to the king, very dangerous to himself; and by earnest request obtained the acceptance of his resignation. In prosecuting his determination relative to the marriage, throwing off in consequence the authority of Rome altogether, and ultimately assuming himself the supremacy of the English church, the tyrant required the approbation, by oath, of the chief persons in the state. Especially the approbation of More, though now but a private person, was of far greater importance to him than that of any other individual. He was aware that More was conscientiously unable to give this approbation, and knew well that nothing on earth could induce him to violate his conscience; yet, after repeated attempts at persuasion, he angrily insisted on his taking the several oaths, summoned him before a council, and gave him time to deliberate in prison. After enduring with unalterable patience and cheerfulness the severity of a year's imprisonment in the Tower, he was brought to trial, condemned with the unhesitating haste which always at-

tinguishes the creatures employed by a tyrant to effect his revenge by some mockery of law, and with the same haste consigned to execution. Imagination cannot represent a scene more affecting than the interview of More with his favourite daughter, nor a character of more elevation, or even more novelty, than that most singular vivacity with which, in the hour of death, he crowned the calm fortitude which he had maintained through the whole of the last melancholy year of his life. Thus one of the noblest beings in the whole world was made a victim to the malice of a remorseless crowned savage, whom it is the infamy of the age and nation to have suffered to reign or to live.*

* In a subsequent paper on *Cuyley's Memoirs of Sir Thomas More*, Mr. Foster recurs to this subject, and dwells upon it with a beauty and force which strikingly exhibit the nice discrimination and sound moral sense by which his intellect was distinguished. The passage should be read in connexion with his remarks on the hilarity of Hume.

"Some grave and pious persons have been inclined to censure this gaiety, as incongruous with the feelings appropriate to the solemn situation. We would observe, that though we were to admit as a general rule, that expressions of wit and pleasantry are unbecoming the last hour, yet Sir Thomas More may be justly considered as the exception. The constitution of his mind was so singular and so happy, that throughout his life his humour and wit were evidently, as a matter of fact, compatible, in almost all cases, with a general direction of his mind to serious and momentous subjects. His gaiety did not imply a dereliction, even for the moment, of the habitude of mind proper to a wise and conscientious man. It was an unquestionable matter of fact, that he could emit pleasantries and be seriously weighing in his mind an important point of equity or law, and could pass directly from the play of wit to the acts and the genuine spirit of devotion. And if he could at all other times maintain a vigorous exercise of serious thought and devout sentiment, unhurt by the gleaming of these lambent fires, there was no good reason why they might not gleam on the scaffold also. He had thousands of times *before approached the Almighty, without finding, as he retired, that one of the faculties of his mind, one of the attributes of extraordinary and universal talent imparted to him by that Being was become extinct in consequence of pious emotions: and his last addresses to that Being could not be of a specifically different nature from the former; they could only be one degree more solemn. He had

Sir Thomas More's constant adherence to the church of Rome was evinced by his writing against the Reformers in a strain of violence most uncongenial with his general character, by his superstitious discipline of a hair shirt and a knotted whip, by certain severities exercised on persons declaring against Popery, by his expressing in the inscription which he wrote for his tomb his hostility to heretics, and by his deliberate preference of death to yielding any sanction to a measure by which the English monarch arrogated the ecclesiastical supremacy which had previously been acknowledged in the popes. In the earlier part of his life, however, he manifested a freedom of opinion which by no means threatened to grow into that bigotry, which in the latter part formed the only, but certainly very serious foil to so much excellence. In his "Utopia" he made no scruple to censure the corruptions and ridicule the follies prevalent in the Roman church, and there can be no doubt that to a certain limited extent he would have zealously concurred in a plan of reform. Till the tumults attending the Reformation excited him to wish that Christendom might be tran-

before almost habitually thought of death, and most impressively realized it; and still he had wit, and its soft lustre was to his friends but the more delightful for gilding so grave a contemplation: well, he could only realize the awful event one degree more impressively, when he saw the apparatus, and was warned that this was the hour. As Protestants, we undoubtedly feel some defect of complacency, in viewing such an admirable display of heroic self-possession mingled with so much error; but we are convinced that he was devoutly obedient to what he believed the will of God, that the contemplation of the death of Christ was the cause of his intrepidity, and that the errors of his faith were not incompatible with his interest in that sacrifice.

"There is so little danger of any excessive indulgence of sallies of wit in the hour of death, that there is no need to discuss the question how far, as a rule applicable to good men in general, such vivacity as that of More would in that season comport with the Christian character; but we are of opinion that it would fully comport in any case substantially resembling his; in any case where the innocent and refined play of wit had been through life one of the most natural and unaffected operations of the mind, where it had never been felt to prevent or impede serious thinking and pious feeling, and where it mingled the clear indications of a real Christian magnanimity in

quillized by a paramount authority in religion, his veneration for the pope had by no means gone the length of ascribing an absolute unlimited authority in religious matters. At all times he held the decrees of general councils in higher respect than those of the papal court; and when Henry VIII. was about to publish the famous book which procured him and all his successors the title of Defender of the Faith, More vainly remonstrated with him against the extravagant terms in which that book set forth the pope's authority.

He probably was not himself aware how firmly the popish superstitions had taken hold of his mind, till they were attacked by Luther; and then he found them become so sacred in his opinion, that he deliberately avowed, and with unquestionable sincerity, in his "Apology," that he deemed heretics worse than robbers and murderers. And since his philosophy had fallen far short of admitting the principle that human authority has no right to punish modes of faith, he considered heretics as amenable to the tribunals of the state, and the magistrate bound to prosecute the enemies of God. The progress of his mind to bigotry and persecution is explained by Mr. Macdiarmid with much intelligence, and with the utmost candour toward the admirable person whom he is painfully forced to accuse.

It is impossible now to ascertain how far More was practically a persecutor. If it were possible, we should go into the inquiry with a strong apprehension of finding, that he did in some measure contribute to the rigorous execution of the laws enacted, or brought into more decisive operation against the Protestants, during part of the detestable reign in which it was his fate to live. It is unquestionable however that some of the Protestant writers have greatly exceeded the truth, in charging him with numerous acts of direct personal cruelty in the exercise of his power. They have used expressions from which it might almost be inferred, that one of his ordinary methods against Protestants was the infliction of corporal suffering. But we have his own express affirmation, which we consider as of higher authority than all other testimony, that he had recourse to personal violence on account of the declared renunciation of every only in two instances, that of a boy of his household, and that of a man who was guilty of indecent outrages on

persons, particularly on women, attending the mass. These two he caused to be "stripped," he says, but not so much, he affirms, as to cause them any lasting pain or injury. Without however proceeding the odious length that has been most unjustly imputed to him, he might, in his high official capacity of chancellor and president of the Star-chamber, exercise much legal intolerance; and from such a view we can only join with all good and wise men in lamenting the deplorable darkness and perversity of human reason, which both in that and later times so obstinately refused to perceive or acknowledge, that religious opinions are entirely beyond the jurisdiction of human authority. What is most humiliating of all,—many of the Reformers themselves, though asserting liberty of opinion in their dissent from the church of Rome, could not comprehend that other men had the very same right to dissent from *them*. The larger portion of the history of the Reformed churches has been the history of Popish intolerance, variously modified indeed, in its action, by national and local character, and by the particular temper of leading individuals, but well furnished with its conclaves, its holy offices, its political intrigues, its bulls, its dungeons, and even its executioners, and operating rather on a reduced scale of power, than with any mitigation of malignity. All this, say the Protestants, is very arrogant and impious in the Papal church; but the Papal church is *erroneous*, and the Papal church is not *ours*:—of what inestimable utility, in the *true* church, would be a modified exercise of that high authority, which is indeed so wrong and pernicious in the corrupt one; it were very unfortunate to lose entirely so grand an advantage gained over the human mind by ecclesiastical authority; certainly it has been very improperly acquired and used by the church that gained it, but *being* gained, might it not become a holy thing in the hands of holy men?—the conqueror was no doubt guilty of ambition and injustice, but his successors who are of course wise and beneficent, may do much more good by retaining the subjugated provinces and the spoils, than by restoring liberty and property. Can the power be too great, when the only object to which it is possible for it ever to be applied in *our* hands is the support of the *genuine* cause of God? When strong measures have been employed

to promote and establish error, are we not in duty called upon to use means equally strong to maintain the truth? Sentiments of this kind are unhappily felt and expressed by bigots, not only in all establishments, but in all sects; however manifestly incompatible with their primary and fundamental principles.

As long as the Popish establishment stands, it will have the effect, not only of setting an example, venerable by age, of ecclesiastical dominion, but of continually suggesting how far it *might* be carried; and it will tend to prevent any set of men from ever suspecting themselves of intolerance, so long as they stop short of the downright tyranny which that church has always practised, and prevent them from cordially allowing an absolute freedom of thought and profession, satisfied with just so much authority over men's religious opinions as argument, eloquence, and virtue can maintain. On account of this influence, as well as of the immediate noxiousness of the Papal dominion wherever it exists, we have fervently to wish for the downfall of all its establishments, and humbly to pray, that the movements of the present awful crisis may happily be made so far beneficial as to result in their final demolition. We come back to the book before us by observing, that the detestable quality of religious, and especially Popish bigotry, is hardly more conspicuous in the exhibitions of Smithfield and St. Bartholomew, than in the fact of its having sometimes filled with virulence such an otherwise almost angelic being as Sir Thomas More.

We must be more brief in our notice of the remaining lives. That of Cecil, Lord Burleigh, presents to our view beyond all doubt the most useful minister that ever managed the affairs of our country. He held the important station during very nearly the whole reign of Elizabeth; and we shall not allow it to constitute any impeachment of either our loyalty or gallantry, that we have wished, while reading the account of his life, that he had been the monarch instead of our famous queen. It is impossible to say what share of the better part of her fame was owing to him, but we are inclined to think, that if we could make out an estimate of the reign, wanting all the good which resulted from just so much wisdom and moderation as Cecil possessed, beyond

any other statesman that could have been employed, and including all the evil which no other minister would have prevented, we should rifle that splendid period of more than half its honours. A very considerable proportion of his political labour was a contest with his sovereign, a contest with caprice, with superstition, with bigotry, and with the prodigality of favouritism. This would no doubt reflect great honour on the sovereign who could, notwithstanding, retain in her favour and service so upright a minister, if the fact had not been, that his services were just as indispensable to her government as those of a cook or postillion were to her personal accommodation. She had the sense to be convinced, and the prudence to act on her conviction, that no other man in her dominions could so happily direct her affairs through the extreme dangers of that memorable period. Though, therefore, she would sometimes treat him with the meanest injustice, contriving to throw on him the odium of any dishonourable or unpopular action of her own, and would occasionally make him the object, like the rest of her ministers, of her abusive petulance, addressing him with the titles of "old fool," "miscreant," and "coward," yet she made him always her most confidential counsellor, zealously defended him against his enemies, refused his urgent solicitation, when advanced far in life, to be allowed to retire from his office, and anxiously visited his sick room in the concluding period of his life, and not remote from the close of her own.

Excepting one or two sublime examples in the Jewish history, Sir Thomas More was probably the only great statesman that ever rose to eminence and power without ambition. Though Cecil's virtue could descend to no base expedients for advancement, he was from his early youth of a very aspiring disposition; and certainly, if the most extraordinary industry and attainments could merit distinction and honourable employment, no young man ever had superior claims. He very soon drew the attention of the court, obtained the utmost that his ambition could desire, and held a ministerial office probably a greater number of years than any other man in our history. With the exception of a very few objectionable or doubtful circumstances, it seems impossible to use language too strong in praise of

this admirable minister. No statesman since his time has given the nation, after long experience of his conduct, such a profound, complacent feeling of being safe. The idea which gradually came to be entertained of him was almost that of a being not needing sleep or recreation, always active by an invincible necessity, not subject to any caprices of temper nor obscurations of understanding, created and endowed to live for the state and for no other purpose, and so far above all meanness of self-interest as to make it not at all worth while to examine his conduct; and after being minister several times ten years, he seemed, in the apprehension of the people, to have outlived any danger of being removed from his office by death. If any unexpected public event happened in England or the surrounding countries, it was felt to be certain that the faithful old sentinel would be the first to see it, and would descry and avert any danger it might involve. If parties threatened to run high, it was recollected that Cecil's discernment and impartiality would calmly judge and balance their respective principles and merits, and that his incomparable powers of conciliation had already quieted or moderated many a political war. If a new man was raised to some important station, it was well-known that Cecil, in his appointments and recommendations, trampled on all pretensions but those of personal qualification. If the queen's favourites were given to wild courses, and seemed to endanger the sobriety of her government, it was not doubted that Cecil would keep a vigilant eye on their proceedings, and would dare, if it should become necessary, even to admonish her majesty on the subject. If a tax was imposed, it was relied on that the careful and frugal minister would not have sanctioned it without an indispensable necessity. If a negotiation was carried on with foreign states, it was quite a certain thing that Cecil would neither provoke them nor cringe to them, would sacrifice no national advantage either through pride or meanness. And if a military expedition was to be equipped, it was not a matter to be doubted that some just and important object was to be gained at the smallest possible hazard and expense. Such a man was of necessity universally hated by every party and every individual in consequence of his disinterestedness, that had any mean projects of self-interest.

to prosecute at the expense of the public welfare; but the bulk of the nation must have wished centuries of life, if it had been possible, to the incomparable minister. The character of his understanding was that of vast comprehension, which could view the most complicated system of concerns in all its parts, and in due proportion, at once; and therefore saw how to promote the advantage of the whole by the expedients devised for any particular part. The character of his political temper, if we may so express it, was a vigorous moderation, prompt and resolute in its measures, and yet seeking to accomplish the end by the most temperate means and in the quietest manner. Moderation was conspicuous in the general scope and direction of his designs, as well as in the manner of effecting each particular object. He was the invariable opponent of war, which he, unaccountably, judged an expedient very rarely necessary even in the most turbulent times, and of which he most perfectly beheld the vile and hideous features through the romantic, dazzling kind of heroism so much in vogue in those enterprising times. But the greatest and most continued efforts of his moderate policy were made in the endeavour to preserve to the people some slight shadow of religious liberty, in opposition to the half popish queen, and a most bigoted and persecuting hierarchy, that incessantly counteracted his liberal schemes.

The boasted reign of Elizabeth was a period of great barbarism, as far as related to the royal and episcopal notions of the rights of conscience, and of great cruelty in the practical administration of the religious department. Cecil remonstrated in a spirited manner against the proceedings of the prelates, which he charged with being nearly the same as those of the Inquisition; but when he attempted to interpose his official authority in defence of the victims of their intolerance, he found they had so entirely the approbation of the queen, that they would set his remonstrances and interposition at defiance. She was a bigoted devotee to various popish superstitions, was passionately fond of gaudy and childish ceremonials in the ecclesiastical institutions, was the bitter enemy of every thing like real liberty of religious opinion, and, in short, was altogether unworthy of being, where circumstances had placed

her, at the head of the Protestant cause. The accident of her being placed in this distinguished situation, and being consequently hated and conspired against by all the Catholic governments, was the grand security for the animated loyalty of her Protestant subjects; and even the Puritans, towards whom the measures of her reign symbolized a good deal with the plagues of Egypt, were so desperate of any other defence against the horrors of a real Popish dominion and persecution, that they entered into associations for the protection of her person and government. Their loyalty, therefore, was obviously in a great degree self-interested; but the following passage, among very many others of a similar kind that might be extracted, will tend to show that it was also in no small degree generous and gratuitous. Away then with the charge of faction and turbulence which has been made against this venerable class of sufferers, unless the charge of faction is also to be applied to the principle of returning good for evil.

"Elizabeth, holding very different sentiments from these, not only prescribed peculiar forms for the worship of her people, but was determined that they should use no other. The puritans, on the other hand, without calling her right in question, objected to the forms which she had appointed, because they had been previously employed in the Popish worship, as mystical symbols, and were associated in the minds of the people with the grossest superstitions. They resolved, therefore, that worldly considerations should induce them to assume what they accounted appendages of idolatry; while the queen, on her part, prepared to employ all her authority in support of this exertion of her supremacy.

"Finding that her council, the ablest and wisest council that England ever saw, were decidedly averse to measures which threatened to involve the nation in the most dangerous dissensions, she resolved to effect her purpose by means of the bishops, particularly Archbishop Parker, who readily and zealously entered into her views. The severities to which these now proceeded, were only surpassed by the frivolity of the pretences under which they were exercised. While the fervent attachment to the use of surplices, corner-caps, tippets, the cross in baptism, and the ring in marriage, were considered as the distinguishing characteristics of a Christian, any dislike to these forms, which were allowed to be in themselves indifferent, was accounted a sufficient crime to subject the most learned and pious clergy-

man to imprisonment and exile ; or, as a mitigated punishment, to be turned out of his living, and with his family consigned to indigence. The most pernicious effects necessarily flowed from these excesses. While the church was weakened by the loss of a large portion of her most able divines, and degraded by the introduction of a great number of men who could barely read the prayer-book, and write their own names, without even pretending to preach, the people began everywhere to collect round their expelled teachers, and to form conventicles apart from the Establishment. Yet these bad consequences only set the queen and her bishops upon obtaining new statutes to reach the refractory ; and at length, even the laity were brought within their grasp, by an act which provided that non-attendance at public worship, in the parish churches, should be punished with imprisonment, banishment, and if the exile returned, with death. An arbitrary commission was appointed with full powers to bring all religious offenders to punishment ; and as any resistance to the injunctions of the queen, as supreme head of the church, was at length construed into sedition and treason, many subjects, of unquestioned loyalty, were imprisoned, banished, and even executed."—P. 156.

There could be no hazard in affirming, that a man combining greater industry with greater powers of execution, never lived since the beginning of time. And when it is considered through what a very long period these exertions were maintained, and that for the most part they were most judiciously directed to the public good, we may be allowed to dwell with high complacency on this great character, notwithstanding the censure which we think justly due to the magnificence of his private establishment, and the reprobation deserved by one or two iniquitous modes of taxation which he suggested to Elizabeth. And though it was certainly very unnecessary, except to his ambition, for him to occupy so vastly wide a sphere of official employment, and it might have been more truly patriotic to have endeavoured to introduce other men of merit into some of the departments, both in order to give them a share of the deserved distinction, and to qualify them to serve the nation after death should have closed his own labours, yet we would earnestly press this wonderful example of industry, as a pattern and a monition, on the consciences of many worthy people who may applaud themselves for having passed a busy week, in virtue of about so much real application as

would have been compressed into less than half a day of our indefatigable statesman.

Notwithstanding the rigorous occupation of his time and faculties by the business of the government, we are informed that he could lay aside all the formality of the statesman in the company of his select friends, and in amusing himself with his children and grandchildren. We are gratified by all the indications that religion had a habitual influence on his mind; and his maxim, given in the first sentence of the following quotation, will furnish the most dignified explanation of the principle which secured the general rectitude of his own useful and admirable life.

"It was usual with him to say that he would never trust any man but of sound religion, for he that was false to God would never be true to man. From his speeches and discourses we are led to conclude that his religious sentiments had a powerful effect in confirming his fortitude amidst the perilous circumstances with which he was often surrounded. At the awful period when Philip was preparing his Armada, and when the utter destruction of the English government was confidently expected abroad and greatly dreaded at home. Burleigh appeared uniformly collected and resolute; and when the mighty preparations of the Spaniards were spoken of in his presence with apprehension, he only replied with firmness, 'They shall do no more than God will suffer them.' The strictness of his morals corresponded with his religious professions; nor could his enemies, who severely scrutinized his most indifferent actions, impute to him even the vices peculiarly incident to his rank."—P. 245.

Devout references to the Deity might not be of ordinary occurrence among ministers of state of that day: the more extensive prevalence of sincere piety among the great in the present times, must be the cause that we now so very frequently hear our statesmen, in adverting to dangers of a similar kind, utter with true devotional solemnity such reflections as that expressed by Cecil on occasion of the Armada.

The next life is that of Wentworth, Earl of Strafford, and it is the longest and most important of the series. It is evidently the result of severe thought, and very diligent research; and to us it appears to be written with the utmost impartiality that is possible to any man who really holds

certain decided principles relative to the right and wrong of governments. We can perceive in the writer no trace of the demagogue or partisan; the amplest justice is done to the talents of the distinguished person, and in several points his conduct is liberally applauded for integrity; while the very fair advantage is given him throughout of being his own evidence and advocate, as his letters and despatches are taken as the principal authority. This life is a most interesting piece of composition, in which the account of an extraordinary individual is very dexterously managed to combine and animate various general sketches of the affairs of the most memorable period of our history. The narration of Strafford's active political career, which commenced early in his life, is preceded by a rapid but very able and luminous statement of the contest which had been zealously maintained, through several ages, between the respective claims of the monarch and the people; which great contest, as he clearly shows, was precipitated very fast towards a decision, at the period when Strafford entered on the public stage. The preceding sovereigns, and by no means less than the rest James's immediate predecessor, had held a very magnificent language on the subject of the royal power and prerogatives; but Elizabeth took care to avoid the necessity of bringing the obnoxious question to issue in the most dangerous form of large demands of money. Her extreme economy in the public expenditure, her admired talents, the unequalled policy of her great minister, her being the chief of the Protestant cause, and the influence which her sex maintained on the chivalrous part of the nation, had all concurred to secure for her a tolerance of the arrogant pretensions which she so prudently forebore to follow up into a complete practical assertion. It was not within the capacity of James to understand, that the nation must be greatly transformed if it could endure the same language, even though combined with the same practical forbearance, from a stranger, of the slenderest endowments, of prodigal and low habits, suspected of Popery, and governed by such a favourite as the infamous Buckingham. But he was resolved that they should not only hear the loftiest strains of the *jus divinum*, but should be made to acquiesce in all the modes of verify-

ing it on their purses, their creeds, and their persons. He was indeed compelled to observe the popular formality of calling parliaments; but he revenged himself by stout though laconic lectures to them on passive obedience, by insults, by declarations of their futility, by peremptory demands of money, and by petulant orders of dissolution. This was the state of things at the time that Strafford, a young gentleman of large fortune, of very high spirit, of powerful talents, and by no means devoid of all good qualities, entered into parliament; and it required but a short time to make him very prominent among the leaders of the popular cause, to the support of which none of his contemporaries brought more courage, or more eloquence. He entered so fully into the arguments of this cause as to deprive himself, if he should desert it, of all apology on the ground of juvenile rashness and inconsideration. It was of course not long before so formidable an opponent received overtures from Buckingham, in behalf of himself and the court which he ruled. What surprise would be felt by any reader who should not have lived long enough to know how these matters regularly go, to find that these overtures were received and replied to with the greatest possible politeness by Strafford, though he had a thousand times, within a few preceding months, pronounced the man by whom they were made to be the greatest miscreant in Europe, and to be intent on such designs as every man of virtue ought to oppose, even to the hazard of his life! He instantly placed himself in the attitude of patient waiting, and in part payment of the price of the good things he was going to receive, began, in parliament, to endeavour to moderate the tone of the popular party; though most zealous for their great cause, he was anxious they should not prosecute it in the spirit and language of *faction*. Our benevolent sympathy was extremely hurt to find, that this virtuous patriot was deceived and insulted by Buckingham, who on second thoughts, had determined to do without him. It then became proper to discover again, that no energy of opposition in parliament could be too vehement against the designs of the favourite and the king.

That king was Charles I., who having made a long and very strenuous effort to subdue the people and the parlia-

ment to his arbitrary government by authority and intimidation, was induced again to try the expedient of converting some of the boldest of the refractory into friends by means of honours and emoluments. He was instantly successful with Strafford, who accepted a peerage, and the presidency of the Council of York; and became, and continued to the end of his life, the most faithful and devoted servant of the king, and of his despotic system of government. He might seem to have felt an almost enthusiastic passion for despotism in the abstract, independently of any partiality for the particular person who was to exercise it. After a few years of his administration as viceroy of Ireland, he exulted to declare, that in that country the king was as absolute as any monarch in the whole world. And when, after the very long series of struggles between Charles and the people, the question was coming rapidly to the last fatal arbitrement, he urged the king to the prompt adoption of the most vigorous and decisive measures; and he was mortified almost to distraction when he saw him, notwithstanding this energetic advice, falling into a wavering and timid policy. His own character and measures, indeed, had always been distinguished by an extraordinary and almost preternatural vigour. His energy and fortitude did not desert him, even when at length he found himself falling under the power and vengeance of that irresistible popular spirit which embodied its determined force and hostility in the Long Parliament, aided with respect to Strafford, by the hatred and court influence of the queen. He maintained the most graceful and dignified firmness on the scaffold, to which he was consigned in the result of the most memorable trial, except that of his royal master, in the records of our history; a trial in which a perversion of law was made the expedient for accomplishing what was deemed a point of moral justice not formally provided for by law. As in all such cases, the bad effect became conspicuous, as Mr. Macdiarmid observes, in the admiration which the heroic sufferer excited in his death; whereas, if he had only been doomed, as he did well deserve, and would have been felt to deserve, to perpetual imprisonment or exile, his name and character would have sunk down quietly to their proper level, and he would simply have been recollected as one of

the many able unprincipled men, who have chosen to identify their fame with that of the despots of whom they have consented to be the tools.

The lives of Strafford and Clarendon furnish a very wide field for observation; but it is a beaten field, and we have really left ourselves no room for repeating those political and moral reflections which ought to be familiar to every Englishman. And besides, our situation is somewhat invidious with regard to one great subject, which is unavoidably made prominent in almost every page of these two lives. By the principles of our undertaking, we are pledged not to advance any opinions on the grand controversy between the religious establishment of our country and the dissenters from its communion;—or more precisely, we are engaged to avoid discussing the abstract propriety of an establishment, and also the propriety of that form of establishment now existing in the country. These are questions, it is true, quite distinct from the *conduct* of the church, or any of its distinguished members, as political agents in the transactions of a history. Viewed in this light, their operations, their influence, their virtues, or their vices, are just as fair subjects of observation as those of the eminent dissenters, or any other of the agents, involved in our national history. But it is not quite certain that we can exercise our right to this undoubted extent without giving considerable offence. Even at this liberal period, when religious churchmen and dissenters regard each other much more as brethren, and much less as even rivals, there are some whom it would be hard to avoid offending, and in whose opinion we should scarcely seem to preserve our pledged neutrality, while condemning the violent and fatal intolerance of the church during the reigns of the Jameses and the Charleses, though it be evidently impossible to discuss the merits, or even narrate the events, of those reigns without it.

MEMOIRS OF SIR THOMAS MORE.

Memoirs of Sir Thomas More, with a new Translation of his Utopia, his History of King Richard III., and his Latin Poems. By Arthur Cayley, the younger, Esq. 2 vols., 4to., 1808.

AN extended article in our two last numbers,* occupied, for the greater part, by Sir Thomas More, forbids us to yield to the temptation of assigning more than a very few pages to him in our notice of the present voluminous work. Yet, as readers of political biography, we might well be forgiven, in consideration of the moral dreariness of the subject in general, for lingering long in sight of a statesman who never once slighted the dictates of conscience, nor in any concern forgot his accountableness to the Governor of the universe. Somewhere in the map of the world, we remember to have observed a promontory called Cape Farewell, and to have imagined to ourselves the pensiveness with which the adventurers who named it so, might be supposed to have looked on it, while departing into the barren, treacherous waste of the wide sea, which they might traverse thousands of miles before their sight would again rest on a grove or a declivity green with grass. In taking leave of a political character like More, who can tell the extent of historical research, or the protracted duration of future waiting, before we come to such another!

The present author has obtained the greater part of his materials necessarily from the same books as Mr. Macdiarmid, making besides a very ample use of More's English works, a more ample use indeed than could be allowed if they were not become very scarce. The narration is too much interrupted and diversified by letters, and by extracts from More's poetry, to assume any thing of the formal style of history; it is very correctly designated by the title of memoirs. The parts which are in Sir Thomas's own words are perhaps the most interesting, the simplicity of the antique expression seeming to give stronger effect to the

* Macdiarmid's "Lives of British Statesmen."

animation and significance which inspirit every sentence; just as a person of ninety or a hundred years old, whose manners should be lively, and whose conversation should glow and glitter with fancy, and wit, and keen intelligence, if such a person were to be found, would at many seasons have attractions for us, with which those of the sprightliest and fairest of our young acquaintance could maintain no competition. By means of these selections from More's letters and other prose writings, and of a great number of anecdotes agreeably told, together with very characteristic and curious pieces of verse, Mr. Cayley has certainly given a striking exhibition of this memorable person. His observations are generally pertinent; and his applause of Sir Thomas, which in passing on we thought rather too unqualified in one or two instances, we found reduced nearly to the standard of justice at the conclusion, by a strong censure of the intolerant spirit which dimmed the lustre of his character in his conduct toward the Protestants.

We are however by no means satisfied with the very slight manner in which the biographer has disposed of the charges of Strype and Burnet; who very possibly had too little susceptibility to the rare and admirable parts of More's character, but whose respectable authority, as historians, demanded some accurate investigation of their accusatory statements, from a biographer who had taken up his work on so wide a scale. His quotation from More's Apology, denying his having employed torture, is decisive as far as it goes; but surely Mr. Cayley did not think it was to stand as a comprehensive denial of *all* the facts alleged by the Protestant historians. Sir Thomas himself, when representing before the court appointed to examine him, the injustice of being reduced to an explicit declaration for or against the king's ecclesiastical supremacy, and when shrewdly reminded by the secretary that he himself in his judicial office had deemed it right to reduce persons suspected of what was called heresy to as severe an alternative, instantly cleared the fact, by remarking between the two cases a difference, which he considered as justifying his conduct; and this admission, and the justification, will serve to render not impossible too many of the charges against him. We are not pretending that many readers would now feel any very

deep concern in having an accurate proof made out of all the official proceedings against Protestantism, of an individual, however distinguished in his time, whose influence on the state of the Christian church has ceased for centuries; but the biographer must not be permitted to take this comparative indifference, respecting the accurate proof of remote facts, as a license for indolence, unless he will have the discretion at the same time to confine his book to a less ostentatious magnitude. When he determines to take all possible advantages of his subject, it can never be fair to avoid its difficulties. If he is content to collect and digest within very moderate limits such facts as confessedly need no very laborious research, it is very well; but when he comes forth with 300 quarto pages of memoirs, and appends 400 more reprinted and translated from the works of the person of whom he writes, it would be a contempt of literary justice that he should be allowed to make up his own part of the publication entirely of the facts most easily found, with very large pieces of extract, which only needed to be transcribed, and indulgently excuse himself from any disquisitions, however important to the character in question, that require historical investigation. When he chooses his work shall have the benefit, in bulk and price, of such a mass of appendix that costs him so little, we surely have a right to insist that what he really does himself shall be done in the most finished style of workmanship. Such a stately publication, concerning an individual, should not, except through a total deficiency of records, have left the most important part of his history involved in nearly all its former uncertainty. While therefore we are considerably gratified by the memoirs, as telling us a great many facts concerning a most rare character, but facts, for the most part, rather easily collected by the biographer, we must tax Mr. Cayley with some degree of indolence, whether regarded as an investigator of historic truth, or the apologist of the illustrious statesman.

If we accuse him of indolence, we do not charge him with any perversion, or with servility to any spirit of party, as a narrator and judge. He displays a respectable freedom of thought, and forms, we think, in general, just estimates of the men and things brought in his view in the course of his

work. We were pleased particularly with the remarks on the character and conduct of Erasmus at the close of the memoirs of More, whom he survived only about a year. The friendship between these illustrious rivals in literature, wit, and celebrity appears to have been that of two men, each of whom knew that his friend if lost could never be replaced by his equal. Fine portraits of both, with short fac-similes of their hand writing, are placed as frontispieces to these volumes.

The youth of Sir Thomas threw out luxuriantly the blossoms of that virtue, wit, and genius in which he was destined to excel all his English contemporaries. From his English works Mr. Copley has given some ingenious poetical devices, written when he was a boy, for a series of emblematical pictures, and a very long copy of excessively humorous verses, reciting the story of a sheriff's officer, who assumed the guise of a friar, in order to gain access to apprehend a man who was shy of him; the sick refuse on account of his debt, which false friar incurred the most ludicrously lamentable disasters in attempting to execute his purpose.

We have before given a slight sketch of the successive events of the life of our admirable wit and statesman, and shall therefore do little more here than extract a few anecdotes and one of his letters.

"His second wife appears from the following anecdote to have been less a philosopher than himself on the occasion of his quitting his high office. During his chancellorship, one of More's attendants had been in the habit of attending him in his service over, of going to his lady's private chamber when the chancellor was gone. The first holiday after the resignation of his office, Sir Thomas came to the palace himself and making a low bow, said, *Madam, neq. de quaere*. His lady at first imagined this to be one of his jests, and took little notice of it; but when he informed her seriously that he had resigned the seal, he was in a passion. The fractious knight called his daughters, and asked if they could copy no fault in their mother's appearance. Being answered in the negative, he said, Do ye not perceive that her nose standeth awry?"

"The good lady is reported to have exclaimed, with her usual worldly feeling on this occasion, 'Filly villy, what will you do, Mr. More? will you sit and make govels in the ashes? it is better to rule than be ruled.'" Vol. I, p. 122.

"While he was sitting one day in his hall, a beggar came to complain to him that Lady More detained a little dog that belonged to him. The chancellor sent for his lady and ordered her to bring the dog with her. He took it into his hands, and placing Lady More at the upper end of the hall, desired the beggar to stand at the lower end. I sit here, he said, to do every one justice; and he desired each of them to call the dog. The little favourite immediately forsook his new mistress and ran to the beggar; upon which Lady More was compelled to indulge her partiality by purchasing the animal."—Vol. I., p. 114.

"During his chancellorship, he had made a decree against Parnell at the suit of Vaughan, and was now in his adversity accused of having received a gilt cup, as a bribe, of Vaughan's wife. Being summoned before the council, More gravely confessed that 'forasmuch as that cup was, long after the aforesaid decree, brought him for a new years gift, he, upon the importunate pressing upon him thereof, of courtesy refused not to take it.' Here Lord Wiltshire, Anna Boleyn's father, exclaimed in triumph, 'Lo, did I not tell ye, my lords, that ye should find this matter true.' More desired their lordships 'as they had courteously heard him tell one part of his tale, that they would vouchsafe of their honours indifferently to hear the other.' He then declared, that although he had indeed with much difficulty received the cup, yet immediately thereupon he caused his butler to fill it with wine, and he drank to the lady. When she had pledged him, he gave her the cup again, that she might give it to her husband as a new-year's gift from him; and at his urgent request, though much against her will, she at last received it. Vaughan's wife, and other witnesses present, confirmed his statement."—Vol. I., p. 252.

"When one of the family of Manners said to More, 'honores mutant Mores,' the knight readily retorted on him, that it was true in English, for then it applied to *Manners*.

"When a debtor to the knight, on being asked to discharge his claim, expiated on the uncertainty of this life, and the inutility of money in the grave, concluding pompously *memento morieris*, More answered him, *memento Mori aris*.

"When one of his friends brought More an ill-written work, to receive his opinion of it previously to its publication, the knight told him gravely 'it would be better in verse.' The man took home his book, versified it, and brought it again to More. 'Yea, marry,' said the knight, 'now it is somewhat, for now it is rhyme; before, it was neither rhyme nor reason.'"—Vol. I., p. 247.

"After his condemnation, a light-headed courtier, as More's great-grandson calls him, having come to the knight, not to talk of serious matters, but to urge him to change his mind, Sir Thomas,

wearied by his impertinence and importunity, at last replied, *I have changed it*. The report of this soon reached the king, and More was commanded to explain himself. The knight now rebuked the courtier for troubling his majesty with what he spoke in jest; his meaning he said was, that whereas he proposed to have been shaved, that he might appear as usual at his execution; he had now *changed his mind*, and his beard should share the fate of his head."—Vol. I., p. 229.

After reading these, and a great many more such instances of humour and gaiety,—after being told that his jocularities accompanied him in the gravest official situations and engagements, and his wit in the most awful ones, as it vividly darted out its beams at the sight of the executioner and the axe; in short, that he uttered pleasantries almost as naturally and involuntarily as he breathed,—a person will be entirely unable to comprehend, unless he reads the whole account of the character, how this very same man should, with all the same natural grace and ease, utter and write expressions which no one can read without tears; how the man, who but two minutes since vanquished the gravity of the austere auditor with his arch turns and gay images, can now without an effort, and with the most captivating and resistible expression of simplicity and sincerity, be making the most devout and affecting references to death and the Sovereign Judge. No character so exquisitely compounded of different elements, has been heard of since his time. It is a humble comparison, else we should say that the character resembled those textures in which several colours are so interwoven, that the slightest movements in the light give them a quick alternation of predominance and brilliance, while neither hurts, but each seems to set off more richly the lustre of the other.

In the short intervals of his trial, he recounted the proceedings, in letters to his eldest daughter; one of which we will partly transcribe, as a specimen both of his language and his character. The Secretary Cromwell had been urging him to re-consider the subject of the king's supremacy, and to make such a declaration as would satisfy the king and preserve the prisoner's life.

"Whereunto I shortly, after the inward affection of my mind, answered, for a very truth, that I would never meddle with the world again, to have the world given me. And to the remnant

of the matter, I answered in effect as before ; showing that I had fully determined with myself, neither to study nor meddle with any matter of this world ; but that my whole study should be, upon the passion of Christ, and mine own passage out of this world.

“ Upon this I was commanded to go forth for a while, and afterwards call in again. At which time Mr. Secretary said unto me, that though I were a prisoner, condemned to perpetual prison, yet I was not thereby discharged of mine obedience and allegiance unto the king's highness. And thereupon demanded me, whether that I thought, that the king's grace might not exact of me such things as are contained in the statutes, and upon like pains as he might upon other men ? Whereunto I answered, that I could not say the contrary. Whereunto he said, that likewise as the king's highness would be gracious to them whom he found conformable, so his grace would follow the course of his laws towards such as he shall find obstinate. And his mistership said further, that my demeanour in that matter was a thing which of likelihood made others so stiff therein as they be.

“ Whereunto I answered, that I gave no man occasion to hold any point, one or other ; nor never gave any man advice or counsel therein, one way or other ; and for conclusion, I could no further go, whatsoever pain should come thereof. I am, quoth I, the king's true, faithful subject, and daily bedesman ; and pray for his highness, and all his, and all the realm. I do nobody harm, I say none harm, I think none harm, but wish every body good. And if this be not enough to keep a man alive, in good faith I long not to live. And I am dying already ; and have, since I came here, been divers times in the case that I thought to die within one hour. And, I thank our Lord ! I was never sorry for it, but rather sorry when I saw the pang past. And therefore, my poor body is at the king's pleasure ; would God my death might do him good !

“ After this Mr. Secretary said, ‘ Well, you find no fault in that statute, find you any in any of the other statutes after ? ’ Whereunto I answered, Sir, whatsoever thing should seem to me other than good in any of the other statutes, or in that statute either, I would not declare what fault I found, nor speak thereof : thereunto finally his mistership said full gently, that of any thing which I had spoken there should none advantage be taken.

“ Whereupon I was delivered again to Mr. Lieutenant, who was then called in ; and so was I, by Mr. Lieutenant, brought again into my chauber. And here am I yet, in such case as I was, neither better nor worse. That which shall follow lieth in the hand of God, whom I beseech, to put in the king's grace's

mind that thing which may be to his high pleasure ; and in mine, to mind only the weal of my soul, with little regard of my body; and you, with all yours, and my wife, and all my children, and all our other friends, both bodily and ghostly heartily well to fare. And I pray you and them all, pray for me, and take no thought whatsoever shall happen me. For I verily trust in the goodness of God ; seem it never so evil in this world, it shall indeed in another world be for the best. Your loving father.” —Vol. I., Pp. 202.

His replies and defence, delivered in a gentle and argumentative manner, were eloquent, saintly, and heroic. After receiving the fatal sentence, he made the following address to his judges :—

“ More have I not to say, my lords, but that, like as the blessed apostle St. Paul, as we read in the Acts of the Apostles, was present and consented to the death of St. Stephen, and kept their clothes who stoned him to death, and yet he they now both twain holy saints in heaven, and shall continue there friends together for ever,—so I verily trust, and shall therefore right heartily pray, that though your lordships have now here on earth been judges to my condemnation, we may yet hereafter in heaven all meet together, to everlasting salvation.”—Pp. 227.

It appears that the cheerful fortitude with which he encountered death was not so spontaneous, as not to have cost him many painful efforts to obtain its predominance.

“ When he resigned his office, More withdrew his attention entirely from public affairs, and devoted himself to prayer and to his writings. He lessened his establishment, sold part of his effects, and sent his children to their own houses. He is said to have passed many sleepless nights in the anticipation of his fate, and to have prayed with fervour for courage under it,—for his flesh, he said, *could not endure a flogging*. He once went so far as to hire a pursuivant to come on a sudden at dinner-time to his house, and knocking hastily at the door, to summon him before the council the next day. This was to prepare his family for what they had to expect.

“ He would talk,” says Mr Roper, ‘ unto his wife and children of the joys of heaven and pains of hell, of the lives of holy martyrs, of their grievous martyrdoms, of their marvellous patience, and of their passions and deaths, which they suffered rather than they would offend God. And what a happy and blessed thing it was, for the love of God to suffer the loss of goods, imprisonment, loss of land and life also. Wherewith, and the like, he had so long before his trouble encouraged them,

that when he afterwards fell into trouble indeed, his trouble was to them a great deal the less."—P. 142.

"In the course of his imprisonment, More seems never for a moment to have lost sight of the end which it was probable he should come to. He owns that he was of an irritable habit by nature, and weak against bodily sufferings. Yet the whole force of his mind appears to have been exerted at this time, in preparation to meet his fate with constancy and composure. We shall find that the effects of his endeavours, even to human eyes, were wonderful; that no man ever overcame worldly suffering in the end more completely, or met so severe a fate with less dread of the stroke."—P. 196.

The account of the manner in which he met that stroke, is certainly one of the most singular narratives in the history of mankind.

"At the appointed time he was conducted from his prison by the lieutenant of the Tower to the place of execution: 'his beard being long,' says his great-grandson, 'his face pale and lean, carrying in his hands a red cross, casting his eyes often towards heaven.' Yet his facetiousness remained to the last, of which three instances are related to have passed, even on the scaffold. On ascending this structure, he found it so weak that it was ready to fall: upon which he said to the lieutenant, 'I pray see me up safe, and for my coming down let me shift for myself.' As Henry had so prudently imposed silence on him at this time, More only desired of his spectators that they would pray for him, and bear witness that he there suffered death in and for the faith of the Catholic church. This said, he knelt, and repeated a psalm with great devotion. He then rose cheerfully, and the executioner asking his forgiveness, More kissed him and said, 'Thou wilt do me this day a greater benefit than ever any mortal man can be able to give me. Pluck up thy spirit, man, and be not afraid to do thy office. My neck is very short; take heed therefore that thou strike not awry for saving thy honesty.' When he laid his head on the block, he desired the executioner to wait till he had removed his beard, 'for that had never committed treason.' 'So with great alacrity and spiritual joy,' adds his great-grandson, 'he received the fatal blow of the axe.' —P. 234.

Some grave and pious persons have been inclined to censure this gaiety, as incongruous with the feelings appropriate to the solemn situation. We would observe, that though we were to admit as a general rule, that expressions of wit and pleasantry are unbecoming the last hour, yet for

Thomas More may be justly considered as the exception. The constitution of his mind was so singular and so happy, that throughout his life his humour and wit were evidently as a matter of fact, compatible, in almost all cases, with a general direction of his mind to serious and momentous subjects. His gaiety did not imply a dereliction, even for the moment, of the habitude of mind proper to a wise and conscientious man. It was an unquestionable matter of fact, that he could omit pleasantries, and be seriously weighing in his mind an important point of equity or law, and could pass directly from the play of wit to the acts and the genuine spirit of devotion. And if he could at all other times maintain a vigorous exercise of serious thought and devout sentiment, unhurt by the gleaming of these lambent fires, there was no good reason why they might not gleam on the scaffold also. He had thousands of times before approached the Almighty, without finding, as he retired, that one of the faculties of his mind, one of the attributes of extraordinary and universal talent imparted to him by that Being, was become extinct in consequence of pious emotions: and his last addresses to that Being could not be of a specifically different nature from the former; they could only be one degree more solemn. He had before almost habitually thought of death, and most impressively realized it; and still he had wit, and its soft lustre was to his friends but the more delightful for gilding so grave a contemplation: well, he could only realize the awful event one degree more impressively, when he saw the apparatus, and was warned that this was the hour. As Protestants, we undoubtedly feel some defect of complacency, in viewing such an admirable display of heroic self-possession mingled with so much error; but we are convinced that he was devoutly obedient to what he believed the will of God, that the contemplation of the death of Christ was the cause of his intrepidity, and that the errors of his faith were not incompatible with his interest in that sacrifice.

There is so little danger of any excessive indulgence of wit in the hour of death, that there is no need to discuss the question how far, as a rule applicable to good men in general, such vivacity, as that of More, would in that season comport with the Christian character; but we are of

opinion, that it would fully comport, in any case substantially resembling his ; in any case where the innocent and refined play of wit had been through life one of the most natural and unaffected operations of the mind, where it had never been felt to prevent or injure serious thinking and pious feeling, and where it mingled with the clear indications of a real Christian magnanimity in death.

CHRISTIANITY IN INDIA.

Christianity in India. An Essay on the Duty, Means, and Consequences of introducing the Christian Religion among the Native Inhabitants of the British Dominions in the East. By J. W. CUNNINGHAM, A.M., late Fellow of Jesus College, Cambridge. 8vo. 1808.

No state of society in which a man can be educated is sufficiently pure and enlightened, to prepare him for beholding, with a correct impression, the condition of the various tribes of mankind with respect to religion. He may first be carefully taught, and may afterwards deeply study, the nature and tendency of religion, as exhibited in the Scriptures and the works of the Christian writers ; and in such a course of instructions and study he must no doubt have formed to himself an elevated idea of the effect which would be produced on the human mind and character, and on the general state of society, by the complete and unmodified operation of Christianity ; but still his idea of this effect will be greatly below the right standard, if during this course he is in a situation for seeing much of the character of mankind. While the mind is attempting to model a finished character, and to give the full prominence in this ideal picture to the fair virtues of devotion, faith, humility, sanctity, and charity, and while it is attempting to imagine a world full of beings, of such an amiable and celestial kind, — it is impossible that the crippled, diminutive, and deformed shapes, which for the most part these virtues are doomed to wear in the Christian world, continually present

ing on his sight, should not materially pervert the operation by which the mind is endeavouring to form to itself the idea of a complete Christian and of a Christian world, and infuse into that idea a certain measure of the surrounding and prevailing imperfection. The artist who produced the Medicean Venus would in vain, with the same genius, have attempted such a phenomenon, in the course of a long residence among the Hottentots, even though furnished with a volume of the clearest and minutest instructions and descriptions relative to the principles and lines of beauty; his power of delineating in his imagination a perfect form would have been depraved by an invincible pre-occupation. It is true indeed, that, in our attempt to form a noble conception of what an individual or a numerous society under the perfect government of the Christian religion would be, we are assisted not only by a book of precepts and definitions, but also by many ancient and modern examples, of an excellence approaching in a respectable degree towards completely embodying the Christian principles. And this is most valuable assistance; but still, these examples are not so often presented to view, nor so habitually present to thought, as to preclude much of the operation of that unfortunate influence, by which the crowd of men as they *are* lowers our conception of what man *ought* to be. And with this imperfect standard of the excellence of Christianity gradually fixed in his mind, a man cannot feel the utmost of that disgust and regret which should in justice be excited by their religion around him. Besides, if it were possible to acquire and preserve, amidst so much irreligion, a perfect standard in the judgment, yet the moral feelings, which ought to accompany the application of it, would be deficient in vividness, as habit tends to make us indifferent in beholding that of which we even perceive all the evil.

In order to imagine a man who should feel the perfectly correct and full impression from a view of the state of religion in the several parts of this ill-fated world, we must suppose him possessed of extreme sensibility, early and progressively affected by the grand truths and objects of religion, brought up, till the age of maturity in the society, of some of the purest and most devout of human beings, in a state of entire seclusion from the world, well

inclined to believe that mankind are now far better than. if what history he has read do not libel them, they formerly were, and chiefly occupied, in his soft retirement, in contemplating religious truth and ideal scenes of moral beauty. And we must suppose also, though contrary indeed to possibility, that when this man is brought forth from his bowers of paradise, and led round the world to survey the various classes and nations of mankind, he shall retain, in passing through scenes increasing at each remove in impiety and depravity, all that strong perception of the malignity of the evils presented to his view, with which he first set out.

Let it be supposed that his first stage of observation is a Protestant country, like our own. Here one conspicuous circumstance would gratify him exceedingly; the book, but for which there would have been no genuine knowledge of religion on earth, is almost in every house, and the inhabitants are absolutely free to form their opinions from its sacred documents. The vast and extending system of efforts for promoting the knowledge and influence of religious truth by the diversified means of all manner of writing and moral teaching, would delight him, till he came to compare it with the still vaster system for promoting show, elegance, fashion, and amusement. A selection of persons, respectable in point of numbers, till compared with the mass of the population, might be found approaching to some tolerable resemblance of the strong delineation of Christian character ever borne on his mind as the rule for estimating moral and religious excellence. But his satisfaction would be greatly exceeded by his grief and wonder when he viewed the nation collectively, and ventured a kind of calculating conjecture at the stupendous disproportion between the measure of religious thought, motive, and practice, actually existing in the nation, taken as an aggregate, and that other measure, which would be enough to constitute them all such persons as Christianity requires. The immense and obvious exhibition of immorality, profaneness, and infidelity, would strike his senses as palpably and as odiously as the putrid exhalations of a surrounding fen; and his mortification and disgust would pass through all the varied degrees as he turned his attention to the

more decorous part of society, and observed the general want of high moral principle, the indifference or very slight attention to the concerns which religion so emphatically insists on, the contentment with mere forms and ceremonies among some who would not be deemed to disregard it, and the ignorance and illiberality of others who really are in earnest in their profession of it.

We will suppose him next to go to the Popish countries on the Continent, and, still, with his sensibility to everything in the religious condition of these countries quite as lively as if he had been conveyed directly thither from his original retirement. Supposing he had never before witnessed any idle ceremonies, any pomp of evolutions and decorations, applied to bedizen the primitive simplicity of the Christian institution, it would be the farthest thing in the world from his thoughts, on beholding the pageants, the tricks, and grimaces, which would meet his view in a Popish country, that these were exhibited as parts and appointments of Christianity. Some of them would appear a bad imitation of the opera, and others an humble rival of the puppet show; the only wonder being how any human creatures could perform such ridiculous mummeries and antics with such gravity of face. The discovery that this most miserable farce pretended to an awful sanctity, and that the chief managers were held in reverence as the peculiarly consecrated servants of God, might as well be accompanied by information of the absurd and impious tenets, and the several base maxims of morality, which compound themselves with this ritual to constitute, all together, the main substance of any thing acknowledged as religion in that country; for there would be no new surprise prepared, by delaying the discovery, that a vile and fantastical ceremonial of superstition must be founded on such notions as will infallibly coalesce with immoral principles, and result in immoral practices. Now our observer, having formed his idea of Christianity from the New Testament, as consisting of a number of very plain, with one or two very mysterious precepts, as prescribing and inspiring a worship of simple reason, very nearly divested of all rites, and as both naturally commanding and naturally producing a pure and good morality,—with what sentiments would he

contemplate this religious tragi-comedy of mummery, error, and vice? Would he not feel nearly the same impressions, with the addition of much indignation, as if he had found the whole nation tainted with a disgusting and pernicious disease, and at the same time so infected in their minds as to be ostentatiously exhibiting the marks of that disease with an air of satisfaction and pride? Would he not be almost tempted to think, that something like the miraculous power, which was first exerted to introduce Christianity on the earth, as a holy and sublime system, must since have been surrendered to wicked men to be employed in transforming it into a system of corruption? Would it not strike him as the most signal and direful of all judgments of the Almighty on the greater part of what is called the Christian world, that he should thus have abandoned his own best communication, to be debased to a state in which it becomes a perverter of those minds which it was originally adapted to enlighten and elevate? And would he not feel an irresistible conviction, that as long as Christianity, in spite of the sacred Scriptures, and of all the labours of reformers, is retained in this state of debasement, there can be no real prosperity or peace in such nations, but an absolute certainty of successive calamities, becoming still more awful as the train advances, and smiting them with a continual stroke till they are either destroyed or reformed?

Let the supposed observer be conveyed next to a country of Mahometans, where again he will find something purporting to be a religion, and even teaching the worship of one God. But the nature and attendant circumstances of this religion would soon unfold themselves to his view. And when he saw its pretended sacred book supplanting the revelation of God by a farrago of ridiculous trifles, vile legends, and viler precepts, mixed with some magnificent ideas, stolen for the base purpose from that revelation, like the holy vessels of the Temple brought in to assist the debauch of Belshazzar and his lords; when he saw a detestable impostor acknowledged and almost adored in the office of supreme prophet and intercessor, this imposition enjoined in the name of God, to be enforced as far as the power of its believers can reach with fire and sword, the happiness of another world promised to every sanguinary

fanatic that dies in this cause, or even in any war that a Mahometan tyrant may choose to wage, the representation of that other world accommodated to the notions and tastes of a horde of barbarians, and, as a natural and just consequence of all, the whole social economy, after the energy and zeal of conquest had evaporated, living in a vast sink of ignorance, depravity, and wretchedness,—the shame and abhorrence with which he would contemplate such a moral exhibition, would tend to subside in a contempt of the human mind, which he would be compelled to regard as a base, servile thing, just fit to be the dupe of all delusions, the drudge and devotee of all wickedness, and the sport and rightful property of whatever individuals of the mass have so much more vigour and depravity than the rest, as to be able to erect a despotism of delusion and iniquity. In passing away from such a hateful scene, it would require a high degree of the Christian spirit to prevent his rejoicing that such an impious faith, and debased morality, are so well rewarded by physical plagues. His religion, however, would triumph over his anger, and he would quit such a country with deepest regret and compassion, making that pensive appeal to heaven, "Hast Thou made all men in vain."

But the last excess of alternate grief and indignation would be reserved for him to feel, on coming among a nation of absolute pagans. It has been the labour of his contemplative life to exalt his ideas of the divine essence, and as far as possible to abstract them from all those grosser modes of conception in which created objects are presented to our minds. He has made many an earnest, though unsuccessful effort, to refine his thoughts to the conception of a pure spirit. After an intense exertion to reach the abstraction of the attributes of intelligence, benevolence, and power, he has exulted to think of their combination in infinite force in one awful Being. Finding, however, his faculties utterly sinking and lost in any trial to contemplate these attributes under the predicament of matter, he has laboured to elevate and expand his idea of deity to the utmost possible magnificence, by contemplating the grandest objects and operations in the universe as the effects and imperfect displays of his attri-

butes, and as helping a feeble mind to attain a slight, an exceedingly slight, approximation towards a right conception of the Supreme Mind. To these ideas, arising from the vastness of the universe, the number, magnitude, and order of the heavenly bodies, the wonderful contrivance and power everywhere conspicuous, and especially in the creation of such numberless legions of intelligent beings, he has been solicitous to add the strongest illustrations of the Deity given in the inspired Scriptures. And finally, the contemplation has not terminated in the speculative magnificence which at once elevates and overwhelms the understanding, but has ultimately rested, with all the inexpressible emphasis derived from such magnificent views, on our own solemn relations with the God of justice and the God of mercy. In the course, and under the just impression of such contemplations, let him enter a country where the majestic idea of a deity, originally imparted to our race, is transmuted into an endless miscellany of fantastic and odious fables, in what are esteemed the sacred books, and in the minds of that small proportion of the inhabitants that read them; and where the mass of millions, together too with the more cultivated few, fall prostrate in adoration of the rudest pieces of mud and lumber that their own hands can shape. Let him walk out from his retired room or tent, after his soul has been raised in prayer to a real and an infinite Being, and approach one of those many shrines which in a populous district he may see deforming the country around him, and behold a number of creatures in his own shape fixed in petrified reverence, or performing grave ritual antics before a filthy figure, or sometimes an unshaped lump of wood or stone, daubed black and red, which piece of rubbish, without a shape, or in a shape more vile and ugly than it is possible for European hands to make, stands there in substitution for that Infinite Spirit which he has just been worshipping:—it stands for the most part in real and perfect substitution; but if it were a representation, the case would be very little better. Let him go on a variety of excursions, to make out if he can a list of all the modes, all equally vile, into which this idolatry has varied its prolific caprice. Let him gently interrogate, or remonstrate with some of the wretched

slaves, and see to what a depth of infatuation the depravity of the mind can gravitate. Let him observe the innumerable ceremonial fooleries, mixed with filthy consecrated customs; and then for a moment recollect, if indeed he can be willing to have such opposites for a moment associated in his mind, the simplicity and spirituality of the Christian worship, the dignity of the very tastes which the religion cultivates, and its appropriate purity of manners. Let him observe, as performed, at the dictate of the laws, customs, and priests of this superstition, such barbarous and whimsical self-inflicted penances and torture, and such sacrifices of living relatives, as it would be supposed some possessing fiend had compelled the wretched pagans to adopt for his diversion; let him observe, amidst these tyrannic rigours of a superstitious conscience, an entire want of conscience with respect to the great principles of morality, and the extinction, in a great degree, of the ordinary sympathies of human nature for suffering objects; let him notice the deceitful and cruel character of the priests, exactly conformable to the spirit of the superstition; and let him consider those unnatural but insuperable distinctions of the classes of society, which equally degrade the one by a stupid servility, and the other by a stupid pride. And finally, let him reflect that each day many thousands of such deluded creatures are dying, destitute of all that knowledge, those consolations, and those prospects, for which he adores the author of the Christian revelation. How would he be able to quell the sentiment of horror which would arise in his mind at every view and every thought of what we have thus supposed him to witness? He would feel as if something demoniac infested all the land, and pervaded all the air, inspiring a general madness previous to a general execution. For he would feel an unconquerable impression that a land could not be so abandoned of the divine mercy, but to be soon visited by the divine vengeance; and that vengeance he would hardly at some moments be able to deprecate, while beholding the occasional extraordinary excesses of frantic abomination. It would appear to him, that the very time was come for a glorious display of justice, and that such a spectacle as that which Noah found, on descending from the ark, would be a delightful sequel to this populous and

raging tumult of impiety. In his retired and reflective moments, his indignation would again relent; and he would fervently implore that the mercy of Heaven would not suffer so large a part of the earth to continue darkened as if by the smoke of the infernal pit, and that all means, ordinary and extraordinary, might immediately be put in action for reclaiming any part of the infatuated and thus far devoted race.

Impressions and emotions, somewhat like those we have described, would probably be experienced by a man possessing a perfect and undiminishable moral and religious sensibility, if conducted, as a witness, through the gradations of impiety to the paganism of our Asiatic subjects. If Indian traders, officers, and adventurers, feel an easy complacency at this last view, it only proves that they are not persons with whom any religious, any Christian argument can be held. A moral sense that belongs to complete man is wanting to them; so that infinitely the most important of the elements and phenomena of the moral world are unapparent and impalpable to them; just as much so as that class of things and properties are to our present five senses, which might, as Locke observes, have become perceptible to us by means of a sixth or seventh sense, which the Creator could no doubt have given us. To these men, all the concerns and interests designated by the terms divine, spiritual, immortal, are nearly the same as non-existent. And as, with their bare half of that perceptive faculty which is essential to complete rational man, they cannot for their lives make themselves see the millions of a vast nation in any character more important than that of consumers of exported commodities, or growers of rice and indigo, or fabricators of manufactures, or the materials for recruiting regiments,—nor comprehend how any greater evil can exist or arise among them than their consuming or producing less of marketable commodity, or their choosing to be governed by one set of their fellow-mortals rather than another, they are most violently angry at a class of men who must needs pretend to see these millions in a far different and infinitely more important light, as beings that have souls, accountable to their Creator, but merged in the most melancholy ignorance of themselves and of him; as

hideously degraded by a hateful superstition; and therefore as objects whose condition calls mightily for the compassion and assistance of their more favoured brethren. But it is this latter class of men who can perceive the moral, religious, and eternal interests of mankind, and of any portion of mankind, as inconceivably more momentous than all their political and commercial economy; who cannot behold without horror a countless population prostrating themselves before idols, and who think a government that does not do all it can to reduce the evil will incur the vengeance of God,—it is only this class of men that can be admitted as competent of mind to reason on our obligations respecting the religious condition of India. Among these Mr. Cunningham stands conspicuous.

PALEY AS A THEOLOGIAN.

Sermons on several Subjects. By the late Rev. WILLIAM PALEY, D.D., Subdean of Lincoln, and Rector of Bishopswearmouth. 8vo. 1809.

WE regard this book in the light of an invitation to attend the funeral of one of the most powerful advocates that ever defended the best cause. And if our regret were to be in proportion either to the value of the life which has terminated, or to the consideration of how many instances of such talent so happily applied may be expected hereafter, it would be scarcely less deep than that which we feel for the loss of our most valued friends. But the regret is not required to correspond to this latter consideration; because the Christian world does not absolutely *need* a numerous succession of such men. It has been the enviable lot of here and there a favoured individual, to do some one important thing so well, that it shall never need to be done again: and we regard Dr. Paley's writings on the Evidences of Christianity as of so signally decisive a character, that we are content to let them stand as the essence and the great argument on the part of its believers;

and should feel no despondency or chagrin, if we could be prophetically certified that such an efficient Christian reasoner would never henceforward arise. We should consider the grand fortress of proof as now raised and finished—the intellectual capitol of that empire which is destined to leave the widest boundaries attained by the Roman very far behind.

It would seem that the infidels, notwithstanding their perseverance in their fatal perversity, do yet nearly coincide in this opinion of Dr. Paley's writings: as none of them have presumed to attempt a formal refutation. They are willing to enjoy their ingenuity of cavilling and misrepresenting, their exemption from the restraints of religion, and their transient impunity, under the ignominious and alarming condition of conceding, that they have no reply to a remonstrant who tells them that their speculations are false, that their moral principles are corrupt, and that their prospects are melancholy—who calmly proves to them that certain declarations and requisitions have been made by the Governor of the world, and that if they choose to repel and ridicule them, they are indeed quite at liberty to do it, but must make up their minds to abide the consequences, which consequences are most distinctly foreshown in those declarations.

With respect to those persons whose judgments are undecided on the grand inquiry, whether Christianity is of divine authority or not, we would earnestly press on their minds the question, whether they really care, and are in earnest on the subject; whether they value their spiritual nature enough to deem it worth while to attain, by a serious investigation, a determinate conclusion on the claims of a religion which at once declares that spiritual nature to be immortal, and affirms itself to offer the only means for its perpetual happiness. If they really do not care enough about this transcendent subject, to desire above all things on earth a just and final determination of their judgments upon it, we can only deplore that anything so precious as a mind should have been committed to such cruelly thoughtless possessors. We can only repeat some useless expressions of amazement to see a rational being holding itself in such contempt; and predict a period when itself will be

still much more amazed at the remembrance how many thousand insignificant questions found their turn to be considered and decided, while the one involving infinite consequences, was reserved to be determined by the event—too late therefore to have an auspicious influence on that event, which was the grand object, for the sake of, which it ought to have been determined before all other questions. If, on the contrary, a strong solicitude is felt to put an end, in the shortest time possible, to all doubts respecting the authority of the Christian religion, the very first duty, next to that of imploring sincerity and illumination from heaven, is to study the works of this author. It is impossible to hear, with the slightest degree of respect or patience, the expressions of doubt or anxiety about the truth of Christianity, from any one who can delay a week to obtain the celebrated View of its Evidences, or fail to read it through again and again. It is of no use to say what would be our opinion of the moral and intellectual state of his mind, if after this he remained still undecided.

It is not perhaps to be required, as a general rule, that a man who extends his investigations round the whole border and circumference, if we may so express it, of a great system of truth, constructing defensive arguments, and planting "armed watch" at every point open to attack or actually attacked, and everywhere looking out to a great distance to ascertain from what quarter and in what direction an enemy may come, should carefully and separately examine all the interior parts of this system. It were too much to insist that the military guardian of a whole country, who takes the charge of its thousand miles of frontier, should acquaint himself with the rural and local economy of its several districts, or cultivate himself some particular piece of its ground. He might tell us it is enough that, while his talents and exertions are maintaining the general security, there is happy scope given for the good management of all the affairs in detail, by men, whose cares are not forced to such a painful expansion. A man who sedulously and ably performs for all other Christian students and teachers, the great office of bringing into their hands, from an immensely extensive field of inquiries, all the most decisive proofs of divine origin and authority of the system, may well

demand that they in return should furnish to *him* more accurate investigations of its component parts than his extended labours will have allowed him to prosecute or finish, instead of invidiously scrutinizing and exposing the defects of his knowledge in the detail. To have exhibited what will be appealed to for ages to come, as a most luminous concentration of evidence, in proof that divines have really a direct revelation from God to explain and discriminate into a system of particular doctrines, is a much more difficult and important service, than assuming this great general truth, it would be to give the clearest elucidation of one, or two, or ten of those doctrines. And besides, the other studies prosecuted by Dr. Paley, with a direct view, as it is fair to infer from their ultimate application, of vindicating the first principle of all religion, the belief a God, were of a nature to absorb long spaces of his life, as they extended to very wide and scientific departments of knowledge.

From the consideration of studies extended over such ample and various ground, and yet all made to conduce to the advancement of religion, we should think it uncandid to exact from this distinguished author a minute precision throughout the whole list of theological questions. It is true, indeed, that the importance of religion, as a whole, must consist in the aggregate importance of all its parts: but we are not making any contrast, or referring to any proportion of importance, between the aggregate and the separate parts; we are merely pointing to the much more extended scope, and the much severer process, of the great general argument, as compared with the argument on any specific Christian doctrine. This specific argument requires of course but one document, of which it assumes the validity, but to the establishment of which validity so many other documents, and so many methods of investigation, were antecedently required.

Nevertheless, on first hearing of the publication of the sermons of Dr. Paley, we thought it not improbable that he might occasionally have exerted the whole force of his enriched and penetrating mind on some selected point of Christian doctrine or morals; and were prepared to expect a number of elaborate, and therefore important, dissertations. We were not apprized that the volume would chiefly consist

of the very short and hastily written discourses which were composed in the ordinary course of his professional services. The shortness, indeed, of some of them, is tantalizing and vexatious. When an important subject has been concisely laid forth, when two or three views of it have been very transiently unfolded, when some most striking argument appears to be just opening, of which we earnestly wish for an ample illustration, then, even just then, comes the twelfth or the thirteenth page, and suddenly puts an end to the reasoning and the discourse, leaving us to a mortification rather similar to what we recollect to have felt on being obliged to shut up a volume of prints of the structures of Baalbec, when we had looked through about half the series, or on being suddenly called away from a philosophical lecture, when the most curious experiments were going to be made in illustration of an interesting proposition. Several of the subjects are indeed prolonged to two or three sermons, but we end almost all of them with an impression of the incompleteness of the discussion, from the narrowness of the allotted space. But for some rather unceremonious addresses on some rather uncourteous subjects, we must be led to entertain a lofty idea of Dr. Paley's auditory; for how important must have been the employments with which their time was accustomed to be occupied, when such a preacher could seldom presume to trespass beyond fifteen minutes! But with regard to congregations in general, it is surely very fair to observe how useless such discourses must be. If even Dr. Paley, with his admirable power of compression and lucid statement, is quite unable in such a contracted space to do justice to the bare *argument* of a subject—to nothing of those modes of representing and enforcing which are requisite to secure for it a place in the imagination under the form of some striking figure or scene, or make it impressive on the conscience and affections,—what can be expected from such a diminutive shred of the composition of ordinary performers of the sacred services? We should undoubtedly be among the most vociferous to protest against a return towards the triple hour-glass discourses of the remote Puritan and ancient Scotch Presbyterian times; but human creatures must be prodigiously changed in that period, if but a tenth part of the same in-

struction be now sufficient to expel their ignorance and their vices.

No reader of Dr. Paley's former works will open his Sermons with any expectation of what we usually call eloquence. A mind, predetermined perhaps by its original structure, and therefore accustomed from early youth to seek the *rationale*, as it used to be termed, of every subject, would come to have little esteem for the lighter matters of imagery and sentiment. Its attention would instantly fix on the hard and supporting parts of all doctrines and systems, as the eye of John Hunter almost involuntarily examined the anatomical structure of all animal forms that came in his view, often quite forgetting all the beauties of complexion, colour, or gloss, and, perhaps, sometimes regarding even the most ornamental appearances of the superficial substance as but disagreeable obstructions to his desired research into the conformation of the bones. Such a mind views all subjects as placed in a state of controversy by opposite proportions and argumentations; and regards it as the noblest, indeed, the only noble intellectual achievement, to carry a question through the conflict of adverse arguments, and in the result to establish some one thing as true, consolidating its proofs by a demolition of all that opposes; and therefore this argumentative mind makes little use or account of any forces but the rigid ones of the understanding, leaving every thing that relates to decoration and attraction to the taste and fancy of orators and poets. If a builder of ships of war happens to walk through a forest, he will take little notice of trees recommended by taper elegance on the one side of his path, or by beautiful foliage and blossoms on the other; it is the oak that his eye naturally searches for, and fixes on with the most interest; and even in looking at that, he does not care about the rich mass of green shade, the fine contour of its form, or the wreaths of woodbine that may be climbing and flowering round its stem; he is thinking precisely of the *timber*, which is to brave storms and artillery.

The compositions before us are devoid of all ornaments, and evidently did not receive the ordinary finishing of an author. The language is sometimes quite homely, sometimes inaccurate, and but barely anywhere attains a

tolerable degree of neatness; it is as free from variegated colouring as the winter sky, while the author's imagination is as subdued as the principle of vegetation appears just now in the middle of December. The train of thought, as far as it is carried, is a most simple exercise of intellect, very briefly analyzing, occasionally with a slight use of the forms of logical process, and generally with admirable discrimination, some speculative or moral principle in the theory of religion, with the intermixture of a few plain reflections of a practical tendency. The passions are no further attempted to be moved than as that effect may be produced by a short and very cool and sober statement of what is deemed the most important consideration involved in the subject. And we will acknowledge that the grave stillness of manner, and the extreme simplicity of expression with which solemn considerations are presented, have sometimes, on us, the effect of making them more impressive, than perhaps we should have felt them as exhibited in oratoric language. For instances, we should refer, among other Sermons, to those on the "Neglect of Warnings," and the "Terrors of the Lord." There are certain classes of thoughts which are expressed by almost all writers in language of apparent emotion, and by many with strong figures, and urgent appeals and inculcations; when such momentous thoughts are uttered in a perfectly calm manner, they come to us, partly by contrast with their usually impassioned mode of being communicated, with a certain air of novelty, which more forcibly arrests and fixes our attention; we are made to look the subject more directly in the face, in consequence of meeting it thus divested of its usual array of authority, and yet bearing an aspect of the highest authority still. It is useful for us now and then to be made to feel what an imperative quality religious truth possesses essentially, and can therefore evince, without the aid of raised and ardent language. Part of this authoritative effect of serious truths coolly expressed, may also be owing to the very manner of the person thus expressing them. Provided he is believed to be a wise and pious man, his thus refusing to come into a state of sympathy with us, and gravely placing solemn truth before us as a being without passions, gives us, at times, an impression as if he were a monitor of a superior order to

ourselves, whose object in addressing us is to execute a serious commission to which he is appointed, leaving us to regard or to slight at our choice what he was sent by a higher authority to say to us. And besides, when important truths are declared in a manner totally unimpassioned, he who utters them appears by this calm manner to place an entire reliance on the force of the truth itself, feeling it of too solemn and peremptory a character to need the help of passion and rhetoric to enable it to command our utmost attention. No writer, however, whose manner of treating affecting subjects is so still and cold, can ever make this kind of impression, unless that manner be also distinguished by a deep and invariable gravity; and this quality prevails in the greatest degree throughout these Sermons. The homeliness of phrase which we have noticed, does indeed much detract from the dignity of the discourses, but the seriousness is never interrupted; we do not recollect one sentence that appears adapted or intended to amuse. The single idea of an amusing nature, excited in perusing this whole volume, has been that of the damp and mortification which will fall on the spirits of any gay, fashionable triflers that may look into these Sermons from complaisance to the celebrated name of the author. Perhaps, indeed, we should not talk of being amused at the mortification which indicates such an unhappy state of mind; certainly we should be glad for any of them suddenly to become so altered, as to be interested rather than repelled by the seriousness.

In speaking of the effect which we have felt in reading parts of these Sermons, from the cool and somewhat austere manner in which the most interesting subjects are presented, we have described something different from the usual course of our experience: from our manner of accounting for it, we shall not be misunderstood to approve, in general, of so cold a manner of exhibiting the subjects of supreme consequence, for popular addresses we condemn it totally. From the causes just specified, taken with our previous respect for Dr. Paley, with the frequent proofs of the same vigorous intellect in this volume, with the circumstance that we read the Sermons instead of hearing them, and with the consideration that the author is no more, we have been considerably interested and moved by several passages which maintain a

singular composure of manner in referring to "the good and evil of eternity;" but the general rule for preachers will always continue to be, that since the instructor and the persons instructed have just the same momentous interest in the concerns of religion, he ought to exhibit and enforce with the utmost zeal, what they ought to receive with the deepest emotions of conscience and the most earnest aspirations for the divine mercy. Notwithstanding the seriousness of these Sermons, and notwithstanding he may disapprove, on account of its formality, the method of always closing religious discourses by a distinct application of the subject to the conscience and the passions, every pious reader will feel a great deficiency of the requisite zeal, on the part of the preacher, in the shortened and inanimate conclusions of these discourses. It will be felt as if the Christian advocate cared not how soon or how tamely he dismissed the subject, as if he dismissed it without having become more partial to it while unfolding and recommending it, as if he had no tendency to fall into a prolonged expostulation in its favour, as if he had no expectation that his discourse should produce any effect, and as if he felt but little of either sadness or indignation to think it would fail.

There will be considerable curiosity, and even anxiety, in the religious public, to learn the exact character of Dr. Paley's religious opinions; and each of the chief opposed classes of the believers in Christianity would be glad to find cause to assume so eminent a reasoner as according specifically with their views. As far as we can judge, he is not to be fully appropriated by any one of these classes. It is evident that his judgment was in a state of indecision relative to several important questions; and that candour must suggest, as we have suggested, the magnitude of his labours, in the investigation of the great basis and authority of religion in general, in excuse for his not having devoted a competent share of attention to the determination of the specific principles, dictated in the inspired book which he so powerfully defended.

It would be more easy perhaps to say what this most able philosopher's opinions were not, than precisely what they were. The first of the person of Christ are nowhere attempted to

be formally explained and are but very slightly unfolded over by passing intimations.

With regard to the death of Christ, he expresses strongly his impression of the mysteriousness both of the appointment itself, and of the manner in which that sacrifice produces its appointed effect ; but he fully asserts that it was really and strictly a sacrifice, that it is constituted a part of the economy of human redemption, and that, though in some inexplicable manner, it is efficacious towards that great object. How much we regret that the sermon written to assert this great doctrine, which we regard as absolutely of the essence of the Christian religion, should have been confined to ten pages ! We could not but be much gratified to find the respected author decidedly avowing this faith ; but it is painful to observe his apparent reluctance to dwell on it even long enough to illustrate its evidence. He says, " We have before us a doctrine of a very peculiar, perhaps I may say, of a very unexpected kind ;" and this its peculiarity and strangeness would seem to have caused him an irksome feeling in advancing it. He seems to have quite forgotten, that exactly in proportion to the degree in which it is of a peculiar and unexpected nature, the proof of its truth ought to have been laboured and complete : whereas he appears to have been haunted by some uncomplacent feeling, which precipitated him through a scanty though appropriate selection of scriptural authorities, connected by short reasonings, and followed by a general conclusion, to escape from the subject as soon as possible by a suggestion or two concerning the moral influence which such a doctrine claims, and is adapted to have, on our feelings. " It was only," he says, " for a moral purpose that the thing was revealed at all ; and that purpose is a sense of gratitude and obligation ;" a position which we do not perfectly understand. We should have thought that the purpose for which that sacred economy was revealed, must be exactly parallel to that for which it was appointed. If it was appointed as a grand expedient for saving men, the leading purpose of its being revealed must be, that men may so understand it, adopt it, and confide in it, as to be saved.

The Sermon which follows the one on the efficacy of the death of Christ, is designed to prove, that all need a Re-

deemer; and this is done in a plain and rather forcible manner, by displaying the imperfect state of the human character, even in good men, and representing what a slender claim could be founded on such deficient virtues. But though it must, on the whole, be allowed, that the Doctor is not very much a flatterer of his species, we think that, in unfolding the culpable state of the human character, he does not go to the depth and basis of the evil. He seems to regard moral defect, or sin, rather as accidental to individual men, than as radical in the nature of man; and therefore that necessity of a Redeemer, which is primarily to be inferred from the inspired declarations respecting the melancholy moral condition of our very nature, is inferred solely from an enumeration of actual sins and sinners. According to our view of the doctrine of the New Testament, it is not precisely and *merely* because men have been guilty of a certain number of specific sins, of omission and commission, that they need a Redeemer (and, on this hypothesis, some men much more than others, as having been guilty of more and greater sins); but more comprehensively and abstractedly, because they are in that radically corrupt state of moral being, of which these specific evils are but the indications and natural results. Nor does our author appear to entertain such an estimate of the operation and awards of the divine law of perfection, as to make the inference from this quarter as to the necessity of a Redeemer, so absolute and so awful as it seems to be made in the New Testament; for though he judges that on the ground of this law a man could not, by his best efforts, have merited the vast and endless felicity designated by the term Heaven, he is by no means disposed to pronounce that such a man might not have merited on that ground *some* measure of happiness; much less that the imperfect obedience would have merited punishment. The necessity of a Redeemer that is here insisted on, is therefore of a very modified kind.

To avoid admitting the appointment of a Redeemer as an entirely new economy of the moral relations of men with their Almighty Governor, in regard to the terms of their acceptance, our author briefly proposes a theory, which makes the death of Christ the cause, and virtue, holiness, or "a good life," the condition of salvation.

"We must bear in mind, that in the business of salvation there are naturally and properly two things, viz., the cause and the condition; and that these two things are different. We should see better the propriety of this distinction, if we would allow ourselves to consider well *what salvation is*—what the being saved means. It is nothing less than after this life is ended, being placed in a state of happiness exceedingly great, both in degree and duration," &c.

After displaying the magnificence of this prospect, he proceeds:—

"Will any one then contend that salvation in this sense, and to this extent; that heaven, eternal life, glory, honour, immortality; that a happiness, such that there is no way of describing it, but by saying that it surpasses human comprehension, will any one contend that this is no more than what virtue deserves, what in its own proper nature, and by its own merit, it is entitled to look forward to and to receive? The greatest virtue that man ever attained to has no such pretensions. The best good action that man ever performed has no claim to this extent, or any thing like it. It is out of all calculation, and comparison, and proportion, above and more than any human works can possibly deserve. To what then are we to ascribe it, that endeavours after virtue should procure, and that they will in fact procure to those who sincerely exert them, such immense blessings? To what but the voluntary bounty of Almighty God, who in his inexpressible good pleasure hath appointed it so to be? The benignity of God towards man hath made him this inconceivably advantageous offer. But a most kind offer may still be a conditional offer. And this, though an infinitely gracious and beneficial offer, is still a conditional offer, and the performance of the conditions is as necessary as if it had been an offer of mere retribution.

"Some who allow the necessity of good works to salvation are not willing that they should be called conditions of salvation. But this, I think, is a distinction too refined for common Christian apprehension. If they be necessary to salvation, they are conditions of salvation, so far as I can see.

"The cause of salvation is the free will, the free gift, the love and the mercy of God. That alone is the source, and fountain, and cause of salvation, from which all hopes of our attaining to it are derived. The cause is not in ourselves, nor in anything we do, or can do, but in God, in his good will and pleasure. Therefore, whatever shall have moved, and excited, and conciliated that good will and pleasure, so as to have procured that offer to be made, or shall have formed any part or portion of the motive

from which it was made, may most truly and properly be said to be efficacious in human salvation. This efficacy is in Scripture ascribed to the death of Christ. It is attributed in a variety of ways of expression. He is a sacrifice, an offering to God, a propitiation, the precious sacrifice fore-ordained, the 'Lamb slain from the foundation of the world,' 'the Lamb which taketh away the sin of the world,' we are 'washed in his blood,' we are 'justified by his blood,' 'we are saved from wrath through him,' &c., &c.

"Still it is true that a man will not obtain what is offered, unless he comply with the terms; so far his compliance is a condition of his happiness. But the grand thing is the offer being made at all. That is the ground and origin of the whole. That is the *cause*."—*l*p. 313, 315, &c.

The Doctor himself is fully aware that this view of the subject, notwithstanding every precaution in the statement, every admonition of unworthiness, every representation of the magnitude of the promised felicity, and every eulogium of the generosity of the divine Benefactor, will yet have a strong tendency, as the human mind is constituted, to cherish notions of high desert after all. He has taken pains and made a very plausible representation of a parallel case to prevent this obvious consequence. But we think it would so infallibly result as to destroy that estimate of the Christian economy as a system of pure absolute mercy, which is so often expressed in the New Testament, and to preclude that feeling of boundless obligation which animated the gratitude and devotion of the apostles.

In the way of showing the incorrectness of the theory, it will be enough just to notice the very imperfect conception and definition of salvation with which it sets out. If any one thing be evident in the New Testament, it would seem to be, that salvation, as there described, does not consist solely in a final preservation from punishment and attainment of the heavenly felicity, but includes essentially that sanctified state of the mind and character, which forms a preparation for that final happiness. This purified state, we apprehend, is represented not as a mere antecedent circumstance of salvation, but as a part of its very essence. But it would be strangely incorrect to call that a *condition* of salvation, which is an essential part of it. Again, the Christian Scriptures state, we should think,

with the utmost distinctness, that the sanctity of mind which is the operating principle in all practical Christian virtue, and but for which not one act of true Christian virtue would ever be performed, is just as much a free gift of the divine mercy, and just as impossible to have been otherwise obtained, as that final felicity which is the completion of salvation; but it would be strange to call that a condition, of which the substance is to be effected by the very Being who prescribes it.

There are in the volume several sermons on the influences of the Holy Spirit; but they do not lay down a very defined doctrine on the subject. In some passages the preacher seems very anxious to avoid representing those influences as of purely arbitrary operation on the part of the divine Being, and to maintain that they are determined towards their object by some favourable predisposition in that object; or that they are not often granted till after they are requested. In other passages, the theory of the divine operations on the mind appears to us to go very nearly the whole length of the doctrine denominated Calvinistic, particularly when the Doctor adverts to the sudden conversion of very wicked men. On this topic he speaks in much stronger terms than are probably ever heard from the greater number of the pulpits of our Established Church; in such terms, indeed, as from any other man would be deemed most methodistical and fanatical. He expresses (and every page of the book bears the most perfect marks of sincerity) his delight and his thankfulness to Heaven, on account of those instances of a sudden change of mind and character,—in consequence perhaps of hearing a sermon, or reading a passage of the Bible, or hearing some casual observation,—which many official divines are attempting to scout, in language of ridicule or rancour, as the freaks or fancies of a pernicious enthusiasm. The Doctor had too much of the spirit of a true philosopher, to reject an important class of facts in forming his theory; and too little of the bigot, to be indignant that notorious sinners should become devout Christians and virtuous citizens, because they became so in the mode and the premises of Methodism. For this contempt of the ignorant, bigoted, and irreligious rant which prevailed around him, we honour

him too much to be willing to make any of the remarks which we intended on some parts of his sermon on "The Doctrine of Conversion," founded on that expression of our Lord, "I am come not to call the righteous, but to repentance;" on which he observes, "It appears from these words, that our Saviour, in his preaching, knew the character and spiritual situation of the persons whom he addressed; and the differences which existed among them in these respects: and that he had a regard to these considerations, more especially in the preaching of repentance and conversion" (p. 116). We would only just ask, Who were the righteous among our Lord's hearers? the Scribes, Pharisees, and Rulers? Or were they the Sadducees? Or were they the publicans and sinners? Plainly who and where were they? Can anything be more evident, than that it was of the very essence of our Lord's mission and ministry to adjudge them *all* unrighteous, absolutely every one, excepting those who were become his converts and disciples? Could any of his hearers reject *him* and be righteous? But it is plain that the epithet was not in this instance applied by him to his converts and disciples, as it had been absurd to say, "It is not my object to convert those whom I have already converted." If, therefore, the term was applied to any class of his hearers, it must be to those who rejected him. And how could it be applied to them? How, but evidently in the sense in which the text has been so often explained, as a severe irony on the proud self-righteous Pharisees? Or if such a mode of expression be thought inconsistent with the solemn simplicity of our Lord's character, the passage may be interpreted as a simple proposition—that it was *because* these persons, in whose company he was so often found, were sinners, that he frequented their company; that to be in the society of sinners was the sole object of his sojourning on earth, for that, if men had been righteous, they would not have needed a Saviour.

As the Sermons are nearly forty, we do not give all their titles. A considerable proportion are entirely practical. A very able one, on the "Destruction of the Canaanites,"* ought to have been four times its present length.

A good summary of the arguments on this subject will be found in a recent number of the *Pantheologia*, Art. "Canaanites."

It would be ridiculous in us to affect to recommend a volume written by Dr. Paley. It will be extensively read; its readers will receive many useful and striking thoughts; and we earnestly wish they may study the New Testament enough to be saved from any injurious impression of what we cannot allow ourselves to regard as unimportant errors.

AMERICA BEFORE THE REVOLUTION.

Memoirs of an American Lady. With Sketches of Manners and Scenery in America, as they existed previous to the Revolution. By the Author of "Letters from the Mountains," &c. 12mo., 2 vols.— 1808.

In common hands, the undertaking to write an account of the dame of a country squire, who lived, half a century since, a couple of hundred miles more or less up the Hudson river, and to do this after the writer has been forty years an entire stranger to the place and the person, and notwithstanding she was perhaps hardly twelve years old at the time of finally quitting them, would have seemed a rather forlorn literary project. The present writer, however, was advised to such an undertaking by her friends; and in executing it, has produced one of the most interesting books that we have seen for a good while past. A brief notice of the materials composing it, will explain how such a quality could be imparted to such a book, even without any severe labour on the part of the writer. The most enviable perhaps of all qualifications for making interesting books, is to have actually visited scenes little known, and seen with an observant and reflective mind, uncommon objects and transactions.

The author is well aware that the great distance of time since she quitted America, and the very early period of life at which her observations were made, will not be favourable to the credit of accuracy in her narratives and descriptions, especially when it is added that she has not the aid of an

written memorials. Under such circumstances, any moderate degree of truth in the sketches, would imply an extraordinary prematurity of thought and tenacity of memory. But these advantages will be amply and confidently attributed to the writer, by every one that observes the nice shades in her pictures, and the minute facts in some parts of her record: while her character will give the assurance of a uniform concern to preserve truth of representation. After saying thus much, it is fair to observe, that a certain fallacy of colouring is quite inevitable in such a work. It is familiar to every one's knowledge that there is a double deception in recollecting, in advanced life, the scenes and events of childhood; they presented a deceptive appearance at the time, to a mind opening to the delights of existence, exulting in the joys of novelty, surprise, affection, and hope, and too ignorant, and too eagerly welcoming a crowd of new ideas, to have learnt to compare, to discriminate, and to suspect; and again, in the recollections in later life, a second imposition passes on the mind, in that fond sympathy with one's former self, that momentary recovery of juvenile being, by which the delights and the astonishments of the early period are represented as more exquisite and profound than they were actually felt. This deception operates in a still greater degree, in the recollections of a person who was removed from the scenes and objects of early interest at the very period of the utmost prevalence and enthusiasm of that interest, and who, having never seen them since, did not gradually lose the emphasis of the feeling by familiarity with its objects. To have grown forty years older in the habitual acquaintance with things and persons that delighted or awed us at the age of ten or twelve, or of similar things and persons, would have given a vastly different character to the remembered aspects which those objects presented to us in our youth, from that character with which they would be recalled to our imagination as the enchanting forms of a vision, which in the early morning of our life was shut up from our view for ever. In this latter case, the retrospections of a mind like that of Mrs. Grant inevitably turn in some degree into poetry; and in the work before us it could not depend on her will, or her most conscientious veracity, to avoid a certain fulness of embellishment, especially in

delineating the characters of her early friends and neighbours, for which her pencil might not have found colours quite so rich, if her residence had permanently continued, and this work had been written, in the state of Vermont. At the same time we must say, that there are so many lines firmly drawn, and so many things true to general nature in the representation of particulars differing strangely in specific modification from what we have been accustomed to witness, that every reader will be satisfied of the *substantial* fidelity of the whole of this very interesting and original series of delineations.

Notwithstanding the new and striking views of nature and human society unfolded in the book, one of the most interesting portions of its contents is the account intermingled with them, of the author's early life and feelings. Her father was a Scotch subaltern officer, in a regiment that served many years in America, in the old times of the wars between the British settlements and the French and Indians of Canada. He was accompanied by his wife and daughter at a time when the latter was too young to retain any remembrance of her native country, and he was stationed a good while about Albany, 170 miles north of New York, and at Fort Oswego on Lake Ontario. At Albany they were introduced to Mrs Schuyler, the widow of Colonel Schuyler, the son of a gentleman of that name, who induced and accompanied the visit to England of those Indian chiefs, mentioned in the "Spectator" as one of the principal London shows of that time. Either this elder Mr Schuyler, or his immediate ancestors, had emigrated from Holland, and ranked among the most wealthy and respectable settlers in the Province of New York, and among the most zealously loyal subjects of the British government. As his residence was on the frontier of the country belonging to the Mohawks, or Five Nations, at that time probably the most powerful of all the tribes of the aborigines, he was the principal medium of intercourse between that formidable community and the province, and the principal preservative of peace and amity. When the French in Canada became powerful enough, in conjunction with the Indian tribes in their alliance, to commence a system, and to indicate the most ambitious designs, of hostility and encroachment, it

was felt to be of the utmost importance to the province to retain the friendship of the Mohawks; among whom the French intriguers, or rather we should say negotiators, had already been assiduous to propagate the notion that the English were a contemptible nation, a company of traders, inhabiting an insignificant island. Mr. Schuyler judged that far the best expedient would be for a number of the chiefs to visit England, in order to have immediate evidence of its power and magnificence, and to receive the respectful attentions of its government. It was found very difficult to persuade them to this undertaking; but at length they consented, on the positive condition that their "brother Philip, who never told a lie, nor spoke without thinking," should accompany them, with which he reluctantly complied. The measure had the desired effect; the sachems were kindly and respectfully treated by Queen Anne and all her court; on their return to America they called a solemn council of their nation, and made such representations, that the Mohawks continued the firm allies of the British state and settlers,—through their intercourse with whom however their numbers and their independence were gradually diminishing, till by the time that the English power was annihilated, they had sunk into comparative insignificance. In describing the reception of the chiefs in England, the writer makes some very just remarks on the proper mode of treating observant and thoughtful barbarians, such as these were, when they happen to visit a civilized country.

The understanding and the virtues of Mr. Schuyler must have been of a very high order of excellence; and these qualities appear to have been inherited by his son, the husband of the lady who makes so distinguished a figure in this work. He became, in his turn, the chief manager and conciliator between the province and the race who saw their ancient empire of woods suffering an unceasing and progressive invasion by the multiplying colony of strangers. In these and all his other benevolent employments, he had a most able coadjutor in his wife; who was his cousin, and had in a great measure been educated by his father, whose fond partiality she had early engaged by extraordinary indications of intelligence and worth. It was not very long after this lady became a widow, and when she was past the

age of sixty, that our author was introduced into her house, where her reflective disposition, her passion for reading, and the interest she took in listening to the conversation of elder people, soon rendered her a great favourite. She attained to such a degree of intimacy and confidence, that Mrs. Schuyler when not engaged in important affairs, would spend hours in conversing with her, and instructing her, and in some of these conversations would relate to her many particulars of her own history, of that of her deceased relatives, and that of the colony: hence the writer became qualified to relate various transactions in the family, and in the province, of a period antecedent to her personal knowledge.

The first part of the work is an ample description of the town of Albany and its vicinity; the site, the surrounding country, the romantic recesses between the hills, the banks of the great river Hudson, the manners of the inhabitants, and their whole social economy, as all these things appeared to the author, are exhibited in the most lively and picturesque manner; and the whole forms, to us, a surprisingly outlandish scene. It is impossible for us to give any just idea of this most interesting description; but the following are some of its prominent features. The children and young people, beginning as early as the age of six or seven were formed, by themselves as it should seem (it does not appear that they were allotted by their parents), into a number of little classes or companies for the mere purposes of friendship and co-operation in pursuits and amusements; each company consisting of an equal number of boys and girls, acknowledging one of their number of each sex, as leaders, and holding a kind of convivial meeting at particular times in the year. Within these companies began very early those attachments which commonly led to marriage, and it was regarded as not very honourable to marry out of the company. In a new and rising settlement, the marriages were of course very early, often when the parties had not passed the age of sixteen or seventeen. When a youth was anxious to attain this object, the usual expedient for providing the requisite resources was to go on a trading adventure among the Indian nations; his father furnishing him with a canoe, and money for lading it with the articles most

in request among those tribes. A most entertaining account is given of the usual severe toils and hazards of this enterprise; and of the strange transformation of the boy into the gravity, the prudence, and the dignified deportment of the man, which is often effected by the care, the foresight, the self-command, and the courage which he has been compelled to exert during even one expedition of this kind. When the young people rashly married before any provision had been made, the parents of both the parties very composedly met in consultation, and the family that happened to have the more property took the young pair home; the young man then commenced his trading expeditions, and the young people and the old people often continued to live together with mutual satisfaction many years after they had ample means for a separate competency, the ancients being as fond of their grandchildren as they had ever been of their own. All the families had negroes, but these slaves were treated with as much kindness as if they had been equals; they were bred up in the house, and their mothers had very great influence, not to say authority, in the family, and over their master's children. When a negro child was a few years old, it was formally given to one of the children of the family, who was thenceforth considered as its master or mistress, and its patron and friend; the two children grew up in the most affectionate habits, and there were innumerable instances of the negro young men braving the most extreme perils to defend or assist their young masters. Yet all this time there was, in the whites, an invariable perfect conviction of a vast and insuperable barrier being placed by nature between them and the African race; this feeling operated so powerfully, that before the arrival of British troops in Albany, only one mulatto was remembered to have been born there, and he was regarded as an anomalous and almost a monstrous creature. Almost the whole of the inhabitants are represented to have been orderly, industrious, friendly, and in short exceedingly pure in their general morals; the correctness of the description, as to one branch of morals at least, is strongly supported by the very curious account of the astonishment, the general mortification, and the alarm, caused in the town by a single instance of seduction in one of the middling families, and this was

affected by a British officer who was entertained there. As an odd exception to the general character of virtue and good order, the writer honestly mentions a custom similar to one that prevailed in Sparta,—a licensed practice of petty thefts among the young men. It was requisite to take the utmost care of pigs and poultry, while all other things might be left exposed with entire safety. It was thought fair to belabour the thief, if caught in the fact; but no real criminality seems to have been imputed to it; it was considered as an established privilege of the youth, and all but the gravest part of the community were too willing to applaud the most dexterous performer for such ingenious tricks as those of which our author relates one or two. The young men were not allowed to join in these frolics, as they were called, after they were married, which to some of them is said to have been no small mortification.

The young people, though brought up to acquire so early a spirit of enterprise and independence, practised the greatest deference to their parents. Law or punishment was scarcely ever heard of in the town. In the rare case of a negro proving incorrigibly refractory, he was sold to Jamaica; and this transaction excited a far more melancholy emotion in the whole population, than the execution of a dozen criminals at once excites in our metropolis. The description of the summer excursions of the people of Albany, leads us into the most delightful scenes of wildness and simplicity, and displays that romantic mixture of cultivated and uncivilised life (though with a preponderance of the former), and that contrast of garden with boundless forest, which must be a transient state of moral and physical nature in any country.

A sufficient number of specific facts are given, to attest the truth, in substance, of our author's representation of the virtuous and happy condition of this community; but there are also some other facts tending to prove that their praises are a little indebted to the rekindling glow of the writer's primeval fancy and sensibility. For at the period to which the description relates, the settlement had been a good while infested by something beyond all comparison more pernicious than the wolves of the desert; by the military from Europe, whose officers had taken indefatigable pains to

deprave the notions, manners, and morals of the young people,—a much more easy exploit, than to vanquish the French and the Indians on the Lakes. By a varnish of elegance and a froth of gaiety, by ridicule of the primitive habits of the old sober-sided settlers, and an ostentation of knowing the world, and at last by the introduction of balls and plays, they created a mania in the young people, which drove them to rush into dissipation like a torrent, in scorn of the authority and remonstrances of the elder inhabitants, and reduced their zealous, affectionate, but too sensitive and self-important minister, to a melancholy which was believed to have betrayed him to a voluntary death. All this had taken place before the time of our author's residence; and though the frenzy had in a good measure subsided, it is impossible to suppose it could have left a state of manners altogether so unsophisticated as our author would represent.

In describing the comfortable situation of the negroes in this settlement, she by no means aims at raising any plea for the slave-trade or slavery; she means merely to state the fact, that in Albany they were kindly treated and comparatively happy.—We must notice the striking inconsistency between the sentence in which she says that “two or three slaves were the greatest number that each family ever possessed,” and her mention in another place that Mrs. Schuyler had eleven, and her information that each child of a family had an appropriated negro.

It would be in vain for us to attempt any abstract of the history of Mrs. Schuyler. She was evidently an extraordinary and a most estimable person; and though so few of us ever heard of her before, her fame, during her time, was spread over the northern provinces of America, and among the savage tribes; nor should we have ventured to gainsay, if her biographer had asserted that the queen of Sheba, even after her visit to Jerusalem, was less qualified to counsel or to govern than this lady. She was courted by traders, planters, governors, and generals; she was revered by soldiers, by Indians, by missionaries, and even by the most depraved persons that ever came within the sphere of her acquaintance. Perhaps the only man that ever offered her an insult was General Lee, at that time a captain in the British service, who in marching past her estates towards Concord, hastily and harshly demanded certain supplies

for the troops, which she would have been of all persons the readiest to furnish voluntarily; but when he was brought back wounded from the fatal attack on that fortress, and kindly accommodated and attended in her house till his recovery, "he swore, in his vehement manner, that he was sure there would be a place reserved for Madame in heaven, though no other woman should be there, and that he should wish for nothing better than to share her final destiny." Both during the colonel's life, and after she was left alone, her house was the grand centre of attraction to all persons in the province who were devising anything for the public welfare, or had even difficult private affairs of importance on their hands; nor can we refuse to believe that it was well worth their while to travel very many leagues, even over snow and ice, to take the benefit of so much cool and comprehensive prudence as our author (though so young an observer when residing there) has given us the means of being assured they would find in that house.

A great number of pleasing details, some of them very curious, are given of the domestic system, the hospitalities, the young inmates entertained and educated in the family, the manners of the negroes, and the agricultural arrangements. Every thing relating to Mrs. Schuyler's personal character and habits is extremely interesting; and we do not believe that any of her friends could have given a more lively description of her manners, or a stronger exhibition of the leading principles of her character, her eminently sound judgment, her incessantly active beneficence, and it is very gratifying to add, her habitual piety. Her literary attainments were, for such a state of society, respectable; she could speak several of the European languages, and had read the best English authors of the popular class; she always continued to read as much as the very active economy of her life would permit. But the wisdom which commanded such general respect was chiefly the result of a long exercise of a vigorous understanding on practical affairs and real characters, aided too, as we must have it, and as Mrs. Grant indeed represents, by the society of her enlightened husband, who was considerably her senior, and was also strenuously occupied, during his whole life, in promoting the public good. They are described as having

been congenial in a very uncommon degree; their long union was eminently happy, and the manner in which the survivor at once evinced, and endeavoured to conceal, the excesses of her grief for the loss, was more allied to poetry than probably any thing that happened before or after in the back settlements of New York.

Having no children of her own, this lady in effect adopted a great number of children, in succession, partly those of her relations; but in directing their education she did not, like divers sensible ladies that we have heard of, suffer her whole time and attention to be engrossed by it, and exalt the error into a merit. She knew that a matron lessens her importance in the estimate of children, by appearing to be always at their service; she felt that a constant course of intellectual and religious discipline was due to her own mind, and that a person of sense and property has also duties of a more general nature, than those relating exclusively to her own immediate circle.

What we should deem perhaps the principal fault of the book, is too much length of detail concerning the numerous collateral relations of Mr. and Mrs. Schuyler. In the instance of the widow of that gentleman's brother, it is impossible to take much interest in a long and perplexing enumeration of persons and personal histories, of no importance in themselves, and serving only to spread out, but to spread out by interrupting and dispersing the memoir of the principal character; the accident of their being related to her, forming the sole claim of most of them to be so much as mentioned.

Before the contest between the American States and the mother country had taken a very serious turn, Mrs. S., with many other intelligent colonists, felt a perfect conviction that the connexion could not continue long, and would be utterly useless to both countries while it lasted. She retained however much of the ancient attachment to England, but was too highly respected by both parties to experience any indignity, or material inconvenience, in the military competition of which she lived to see the commencement, but not the close: she died in 1788 or 1789, not much short of the age of eighty.

The house of this distinguished family having been fre-

quoted by the principal commanders in the Canadian wars, short sketches are given of some of their characters, together with narratives of some of the most remarkable of their proceedings, especially of the fatal attempt on Ticonderoga, in which the author's father was present, and of the bold and intelligent schemes executed at Fort Oswego by Colonel Duncan, a brother of the late Admiral Lord Duncan.

A very large proportion of these volumes relates to the Indian tribes, and affords many most interesting descriptions and observations. The author used often to visit some detached families of the Mohawks (which denomination she seems, in one or two instances, to apply to the whole of the Five Nations, though the Mohawks were only one tribe of that league) that encamped in the neighbourhood of Albany during the summer, and kept up a friendly and intimate intercourse with the settlers. Some of these Indians were Christians; and a very pleasing account is given of the benevolent efforts which had long been made by some of the families, especially the female part of them, to insinuate Christian knowledge and habits among these wild but not unreflecting tribes.

In the course of a journey to Lake Ontario, our author was *presented* at the court, or at least in the *palace*, of the most famous warrior of the Five Nations; and she gives a most amusing account of his manners, and of her feelings on the occasion. In addition to what she saw of the Indians herself, she eagerly listened to the innumerable accounts of them given by the traders and the military men who had been among them. From the impression made by the boldness and the wildness of the Indian character on her young imagination, we do not wonder to see a strong tincture of favourable partiality in her representations and reasonings concerning those nations; yet we rather wonder to see, in a lady's description, the epithets "high-souled and generous" applied to these heroes, just two pages after the account of the most miserable state of slavery and oppression in which their wives are uniformly held. No one is disposed to deny that there are certain modifications of the savage character analogous to virtue in such tribes, especially perhaps the Mohawks; but it is now quite too

late in the day for us to accept any estimate of the condition of *any* savage people whatever, as, *on the whole*, otherwise than profoundly depraved and miserable.

Our author gives a very striking view of the process by which the American tribes have lost their independence, and are very fast losing even their existence, in consequence of their intercourse with their civilised neighbours. Her explanation of this point is introduced by some general speculations on the progress of civilisation in Europe, which should rather have been reserved to be rendered more simple and precise by maturer consideration.

The roguery of the American citizens, in the district now called Vermont, deprived the author's father of a valuable portion of land, several years previously to the period at which he would have been certain to lose it as a loyalist. Nothing to be sure can be much more odious and disgusting than that system of deception, chicane, and rascality, which she describes as having overspread that part of the country, and driven her father to desert his plantation, and return to Europe, even before he had lost all hope of supporting his claims. We have not much to object to, in her many spirited observations on the American character and government. But we cannot very well comprehend the reasonableness of those animadversions on the assumption of independence by the American States, which seem to proceed on the principle that either they should always have continued dependent, or should have waited till England should voluntarily set them free. The former is obviously absurd; and how many thousand years must they have waited to realize the latter? Nor can we work ourselves into any thing like an animated sympathy with certain high-flown sentiments of patriotism, which, in remonstrance against the desire to emigrate from a land of taxes, would seem to go far towards telling a man who is anxiously considering how his family are to live, that the "proud recollection that he is in the country that has produced Milton and Newton," is a much better thing than to have plenty of good corn, bacon, cabbage, &c. &c., in such a low-minded place as America.

There is one passage relative to the Puritan settlers in the northern provinces, which we read with surprise:—

"The people of New England left the mother country as banished from it by what they considered oppression; came over foaming with religious and political fury, and narrowly missed having the most artful and able of demagogues, Cromwell himself, for their leader and guide. They might be compared to lava, discharged by the fury of internal combustion, from the bosom of the commonwealth, while inflamed by contending elements. This lava, every one acquainted with the convulsions of nature must know, takes a long time to cool; and when at length it is cooled, turns to a substance hard and barren, that long resists the kindly influence of the elements, before its surface resumes the appearance of beauty and fertility. Such were the almost literal effects of political convulsions, aggravated by a fiery and intolerant zeal for their own mode of worship, on these self-righteous colonists."—Vol. I., p. 197.

Is it possible that some idle partiality to the House of Stuart can have had the influence to prompt this strange piece of absurdity? Whatever has prompted, it does really seem very foolish not to know, that the emigrants in question were the most devout and virtuous part of the English nation, and were glad to escape to a melancholy desert from the pillories and prisons of such tutelar saints of Britain as Laud.

While noticing faults, we may apprise the reader that these volumes, apparently from haste, are written with much carelessness and incorrectness of expression. But he will find everywhere great animation, and ease, and variety; and in many places elegance and energy. The descriptions are beautiful, and various, and new, in the highest degree: we will for conclusion transcribe one of them; we might transcribe a third part of the book.

"In one place, where we were surrounded by hills, with swamps lying between them, there seemed to be a general congress of wolves, who answered each other from opposite hills, in sounds the most terrific. Probably the terror which all savage animals have at fire was exalted into fury, by seeing so many enemies, whom they durst not attack. The bull-frogs, the harmless, the hideous inhabitants of the swamps, seemed determined not to be out-done, and roared a tremendous bass to this bravura accompaniment. This was almost too much for my ears of the terrible sublime: some women, who were our fellow-travellers, shrieked with terror; and finally the horrors of that

night were ever after held in awful remembrance by all who shared them."--Pp. 117, 118.

SOUTHEY'S CHRONICLE OF THE CID.

Chronicle of the Cid. From the Spanish. By ROBERT SOUTHEY.
4to. 1809.

DURING the seven centuries that have elapsed since the death of the Cid, there has probably never been a time, till within the last seven months, when a large volume of half-legendary history of his adventures would have had any great chance of obtaining much attention in England. Just now is the time, or rather four or five months since was the time, for calling some of the chiefs of the ancient Spanish chivalry from their long slumber, in order to assist us to extend backward into former ages our interest in the heroic character of that nation; a nation in which we had begun to hope that almost every nobleman and every peasant was going to perform such exploits as those of the Cid, in a more righteous cause than almost any in which that hero had the fortune to display his valour. We are never content to confine our admiration to the present spirit and actions of an individual, or of a people, that has become a favourite with us, if we can find or fancy anything deserving to be admired in the retrospect of its earlier times. Besides, when a people is entering on a grand and most perilous enterprise, in which it is evident that any thing less than the most heroic spirit must fail, the martial names and achievements of its ancestors have a certain influence—a greater, indeed, than is warranted by the history of national character—on our hopes of its success. When summoned to vindicate the national cause, the men surely will not hide themselves from danger among the very monuments of their heroic progenitors; they cannot be content to read and recite the stories of invincible champions of their own names, and, by their nativity, reflecting glory on their own villages and towns, and yet see these towns and villages commanded and plundered by bands of

foreign invaders; they *cannot* endure to see their country and themselves in a state to make them abhor the recollection that such renowned heroes were their forefathers. Is it possible that the Spaniards of the present day, recalling to mind the gallant hostility which once expelled the Moors, can quietly sink down under the domination of the modern Saracens? It has occurred to our thoughts numberless times, while going through this volume, what an intolerable place their country would soon become, to the usurping enemy, if the martial spirit which blazed all over it in the eleventh century could be now rekindled; and what a dreadful impression would be made on the Gallic squadrons by even a very small army of such men as this Rodrigo Diaz, and those that fought by his side. The very same reflections have occurred, no doubt, to multitudes of the Spanish nation, within the last few months; but, notwithstanding all such reflections, and the momentary ardour they may in some instances possibly have excited, it would appear that one more proof remained to be given, that, in these times, the tombs, the histories, and the splendid fables of valiant ancestors have lost all their power against a daring invader.

As all our readers, as well as ourselves, talk less or more every day of the events in Spain, which have lately awakened the strongest interest throughout the whole civilized world, it will, perhaps, be permitted us to take this occasion of suggesting a few considerations relative to those events, and to the manner in which they have been viewed and celebrated in this country.

With regard to the manner in which those events have been beheld and discussed, it is painful to us, as believers in Christianity, to have to observe that it may be doubted whether there has ever been a grand affair, involving a most momentous crisis, and creating a profound and universal solicitude, which was contemplated in this country with any thing so much like a general consent to forget all religious considerations. The anxiety which we have fully shared with all around us, for the success of the Spanish people, could not prevent us from sometimes thoughtfully observing in what terms anxiety, speculation, or triumph were expressed by veteran statesmen, young political philosophers, many divines, the whole tribe almost of journalists,

and a very large proportion of the mass of the people; and it has been exceedingly striking to perceive the general willingness to exempt the Governor of the world from the exercise of care or interference. We really believe we have hardly met with one political or military calculation on the powers and probabilities in this great commotion, in which the fact of an Almighty Providence, if any accident could have suggested it to the calculator's thoughts, would have been of half as much importance in his account, as one regiment of soldiers more or less, or one cargo of ammunition. But in general, the thought seems not to have occurred at all; the plans, the reasonings, the auguries, the exultation, and the fears, have all been entertained and revolved under an entire failure to recollect that an invisible Being has ever decided the course and events of human affairs. And the benefit of this exclusion of every thought relating to that Being has been very great to the confident class of speculators, as it has simplified their calculations; the interference of an invisible power is a thing so independent and mysterious, that it is very difficult to adjust its place and value among the elements of the calculation; but let the whole matter be reduced to a plain account of so many men in arms against so many, and we go directly to the consequence without hesitation.

We could not deem it a favourable omen, when we observed the general, and we think unequalled, prevalence in this Christian country, of so light an estimate of the dependence of human affairs on the Supreme Governor. Another very prominent circumstance has been the apparent renunciation of all concern about the stability or subversion of the power of the Romish church. In times that are past, yet not so long past but we ourselves can remember them, this most impious, tyrannic, and cruel power was regarded as one of the most pernicious and hateful things on the face of the whole earth; and its grand instrument, the Inquisition, was considered as precisely the utmost reach of diabolical contrivance and malignity. English Protestants could not hear the words Heresy and Inquisition, without instantly thinking of crowds of racked, or burning, or bleeding martyrs; of numerous other pious and holy men perishing in dungeons and

deserts; of soldiers, stimulated by priests to merit heaven by absolutely wantoning in the torments and death of women and children; of midnight spies; of domestics exhorting and threatened into informers; of the general interdiction of divine knowledge by severe punishments for reading the Bible; of an infinite swarm of lazy, bigoted, and vicious ecclesiastics; of the worship of saints and of images; and of a train of follies and impieties, in doctrine and ceremony, far too numerous to be named. Nothing inspired greater delight than any symptoms of the approaching fall of this most execrable power; our anticipations of the prosperity or decline of any of the political states of Europe depended very much, perhaps more than on any other thing whatever, on the degree in which they respectively assisted or opposed that impious and cruel hierarchy; while many devout and learned writers, and a multitude of their readers, rejoiced to discern any coincidence between passing events and the prophecies of the fall of Antichrist. In looking round on the states that support this enormous usurpation on the liberty, the reason, and the conscience of mankind, it was notorious that Spain and Portugal were the most faithful subjects of the slavery and abettors of the tyranny. When the recent movement in Spain became so extensive as apparently to promise to raise the whole effective population in arms, we began to entertain a most earnest sentiment, something between the desponding desire and the hope, that now, at last, not only a repelling boundary, much more lofty and impervious than the Pyrenees, would be raised against the irruptions, on one side at least, of the grand tyrant of Europe, but also that in some way or other, the strongest hold of Popery would be eventually shaken into ruins. It was not to be expected that any direct measures, for reducing the inveterate ascendancy of the Popish establishment, would form a part of the first revolutionary proceedings. But, as we trusted that all the genius and knowledge in the country would be called forth by the great occasion, and that the most able, enlightened, and liberal men would soon come to occupy the vacated powers of government, we flattered ourselves they would be too wise, as statesmen, to be bigoted as Catholics. We presumed they could not but feel that the

freedom which deserved to be sought at the expense of a prolonged and direful conflict with the greatest military power the world ever saw, would remain imperfect, dishonoured, and in a great measure useless, unless something were at least gradually effected, for reducing that despotism of superstition, which would else be a fatal obstacle to all grand schemes of national improvement. We thought that the great commotion, which would excite throughout the whole nation twenty times more bold thought and strong passion than had prevailed in it at any one period for centuries past, would give such a shock to the dominion of superstition, as to loosen and crack all its impositions and institutions. And why should we forbear to add that we had a new ground of hope, when this liberal and Protestant nation determined to put forth all its immense strength in aid of the Spanish cause, and when it was avowed in both countries that without this aid that cause could not triumph. It was quite natural to conclude that this Protestant nation, which had but very recently testified its antipathy to Popery with an ardour of zeal almost flaming into fanaticism, would accompany this assistance, if not with the stipulated condition, at least with the most powerful recommendation of some remission of the rigours of spiritual slavery; a recommendation which, under such circumstances, could not have failed to be effectual.

Thus, we had begun to indulge anticipations of momentous changes in favour of intellect, conscience, and religion, to arise from the great movement in assertion of national liberty. When, however, in the simplicity of our hearts, we began to give vent to some of these imaginations, in such little humble circles of politicians as we can be supposed to be admitted in, we found our notions received with a smile of contempt. We were told that these are not times for recalling the antiquated, trifling controversies of divines about Popery and Protestantism; that enlightened politicians are now of opinion that the iniquitous institutions of the superstition of any country ought to be held sacred and inviolate in that country; that if a few Protestants have sometimes got themselves into the dungeons of the Inquisition, it was their own fault, as they might have gone quietly to mass like their neighbours; that, in short, any

such concerns as that of securing such things as liberty of religious profession and worship, are altogether beneath the notice of states, and those who preside over them, in great conjunctures of their affairs. We were rather plainly told, that such grand events as those of the present time, are not for the understandings of persons who can never advert to any great subject without making it little by some conceit about Providence, and whose first grovelling anxiety and last, in political commotions and revolutions, fixes itself on no greater an object than what it calls the advancement of pure religion,—meaning perhaps, in truth, nothing better than the progress of Methodism.

On this, we betook ourselves for a while to the silent observation of events and opinions, and soon perceived that we had indeed entertained a very fantastic kind of sentiments. Except a number of religionists of the most antiquated stamp, nobody seemed to recollect any harm that Popish intolerance had ever done; the Inquisition was almost become venerable, as a fortress of the faith against modern infidelity; at any rate, it was a powerful support of the ancient established order of things; a most bigoted tribe of priests had our cordial license to hunt heretics, and keep the people in the most wretched and debasing ignorance, if they would only make sanguinary addresses (many of them were in the most savage style) to rouse the population to war. Let but the enemy be destroyed, and the conquerors might celebrate their victory, for anything our nation seemed to care, with an *auto da fé*. The very fortresses that Englishmen might shed their blood in recovering from the enemy, might be allowed to become, the following year or month, the prisons of those who wished for liberty to profess the faith of their generous deliverers. All were enthusiastic, and very justly so, for the rescue of Spain and Portugal; governors and people, debaters, newswriters, reviewers, all breathed fire against Attila and his barbarians; and when these invaders were exterminated, the glorious result was to be—what was it to be? what in all reason ought it to be? As far as we could understand, it was to be a full restoration of that order of things under which those countries had for ages invariably presented the most melancholy spectacle of imprisoned mind, of tyrannic

superstition, and of national prostration, in all Europe. We say a full restoration, for there was not, that we remember, a single particular of the whole wretched economy specified for reformation, in the event of success, or as a condition of our powerful and expensive co-operation to secure it.

That great improvement of modern times, the division of labour, may have extended much further than we were aware. In some past periods, there have been in England politicians and statesmen of very great note in their day, who assumed it as part of their vocation, to promote, to the utmost of their power, in their transactions with allies, the security of conscientious men and reforming reasoners, against the persecuting malice of a spiritual tyranny. It may be, that now the narrowed province of this class of men no longer includes this concern. This may be—but then another thing also may be, if they have excluded from their department a concern which the Divine Governor has included within their duty, it may be that schemes and enterprizes, in professed vindication of liberty, are, on account of this indifference or contempt shown to the most sacred branch of liberty, destined to fail. The division of labour might be carried so far as to be fatal; if the officers and crew of a damaged ship at sea should choose to say, that *their* business is to navigate the vessel and defend it against the enemy, and that as to the leak, which is fast filling the hold, *that* belongs to the shipwright's business in the port, the consequence would not be very doubtful. We began to fear, a good many months since, that such a fate awaited our grand undertaking in favour of Spain. For the last twenty years, it had appeared most evident, that Providence was hastening the fall of incomparably the most dreadful tyrant that ever arrogated the dominion of Europe—the Popish superstition; it had become the general ~~and~~ assension of wise and good men, both from examining the Scriptures and observing the course of events, that this divine process of emancipation, which had been so ardently longed and prayed for by millions of the devoutest and holiest men that ever inhabited the earth, would proceed rapidly to its completion; and therefore it was impossible to ~~repel~~ the conviction, independently of all calculations of

comparative military forces, that the mightiest effort in the power of any nation to make; if a chief object of that effort was absolutely to maintain the Popish system in all its ancient rigour, must fail; and that any other nation, especially if a Protestant nation, lending its assistance *on such terms as to adopt and promote this object*, must eventually retire with disaster and humiliation. This object, in its most decided form, was invariably avowed in Spain; and as far as the public are yet informed, the whole resources of this country were pledged, without a stipulation or a remonstrance, against a system which would doom any advocate of pure religion to imprisonment, or tortures, or death. Our politicians may say it was not within their province, "not in their competence," to take account of any such matters; but neither, therefore, was it permitted to be in their competence, with the whole vast means of this country at their disposal, to accomplish any part of the great political project. A most signal fatality has appeared to accompany every measure and movement; the results are before us; Spain is overwhelmed, and our armies, after months and months of inefficiency and ostentation, are driven out under circumstances of the utmost affliction and mortification, and followed by the most bitter taunt that ever stung this nation, that "in spite of the English, the Inquisition, the overgrown monkish establishments, and the oppressive privileges of the nobles, have ceased to exist in Spain." What a memorable fact it will be in the history of these times, that the enlightened nation, which had so long been the grand champion of Protestantism, should have justly incurred this poignant and triumphant reproach from a conqueror, who is himself a pretended Papist! The wonder, however, will relate solely to the principles on which the enterprise was undertaken; there will be no wonder at the consequence: if one of the most emphatic petitions which good men could have concurred to address to Heaven, for the Spanish people, would have been, that such institutions might fall,—and if the intimations of revelation combined with the recent and contemporary train of events, to give solemn signs that the Papal institutions were in fact just ready to fall,—what was the result to be reasonably apprehended, when a Protestant nation should undertake to

exert its utmost force, that, as connected with the other establishments of the unhappy people, these institutions might stand? Was it to be expected that out of pure favour to the English, as Protestants, the Supreme Disposer would suspend his operations for destroying the Popish domination?

We gladly believe there are times yet to come, when politicians will be aware that the question, what monarch or what dynasty is to rule any particular portion of the earth, is an exceedingly trifling matter in the view of Him that governs it all, compared with the promotion or the repression of the cause of pure Christianity. How many more disastrous calculations and events are to enrich our history with melancholy instruction for their benefit, remains to be seen, and it is not difficult to imagine new occasions for practically trying, whether it is really a judicious principle in politics, for a Christian and Protestant nation to lend its force and sanction formally to maintain and consolidate the most pernicious and cruel superstitions of every country where it has an absolute or an influential power. This point should be decided, and if all the experiments are to be made on an assumption of the affirmative, it is not too much to anticipate that the series may be very short, and that the result may be recorded on the monumental ruins of a great empire.

Some readers may perhaps here allege, that the martial despot that has been *successful*, is also a supporter of superstition, that he inserted in the new constitution for Spain, framed at Bayonne, an article expressing that no religion but Popery should be legally tolerated, and that he carried this into effect in agreeing to the first article of capitulation proposed by the inhabitants of Madrid. We may answer, first, it cannot reasonably surprise us, if the Divine Being should manifest a much sorer indignation against the formal support of Popish superstition, by a nation long eminent for zealous Protestantism, than against even the same support by a nation long equally eminent for its zealous Popery. Secondly, though Napoleon does pretend, and in some degree practise, an adherence to the *Romish* church, yet all Europe sees that he is, in effect, its enemy and destroyer; he treats some of its most sacred institutions

with contempt, and for his own purposes is gradually abolishing the various organs of power that made it so formidable. As far, therefore, as an able, powerful, bad man, who does everything from motives of selfish policy and ambition, may be a fit agent, under the divine government, for breaking up by degrees the dounion under which reason and conscience have so long been reduced to suffer, the present agitator of nations seems the right operator.

We have thus endeavoured to explain how we soon began to despair, on a religious ground, of a cause, for the success of which our anxiety, in a political reference, most warmly sympathized with that of our countrymen in general. We will now venture one or two brief observations on the political grounds of hope, afforded by the first stages of the grand movement.

That a nation in arms cannot be conquered, is perhaps a proposition, like many others that sound very well, of but little meaning. The thing cannot be realized; there never can be a nation in arms. Say that the men capable of bearing arms, that is, not too young, nor too old, nor too unhealthy, are as much as a sixth part of the whole population; this will indeed give a most formidable list in such a country as Spain. But then how evident it is, that only a slender minority of this enrolment will ever come into action. A very large proportion of these competent men must be employed in preparing the furniture of war for those who actually take the field; a large proportion of them must attend to the indispensable concerns of agriculture; millers, and numerous manufacturers and shopkeepers, must keep to their business, if the population is to be regularly supplied with the most direct necessities; many of the enumerated men must stay to take care of their sick, their aged, or their infant relatives: in a Catholic country a number are under ecclesiastical restriction; a considerable number of men to write and print, are as necessary, in such a juncture, as men to fight; many must be employed in every district, in concerns of council and police; a number, in almost any imaginable war, will join the enemy, at any point where he has been signally successful. We will add only one other class, that is cowards, who positively will not fight at all, and whom it would require more than half of

those that will fight, to attempt to hunt and capture and coerce into battle; of these there naturally must be a very large number in every nation of Europe; and these, in addition to their timidity, will generally be sceptical enough as to the necessity of the war itself; such concessions as *they* would have made, and as they think ought to have been made, rather than provoke so dreadful an extremity, would have averted it.

We have heard commonly enough, of late, of five or six hundred thousand warriors being ready to march, or even of a "million of heroes panting to rush on the enemy, and resolved to conquer or perish;" the absurdity of such flourishes might be apparent, on a moment's reflection, which is enough to convince us that though we may talk of "rising in a mass," and of a "nation in arms," it is in fact but a comparatively small proportion of the inhabitants physically capable of acting in arms, that can at any time, in any civilized country, be brought into military operation. Instead of the innumerable myriads, which many of us seemed to imagine would drive on like the moving sand of the Arabian desert, and absolutely overwhelm the first large French army that should venture to present its front in Spain; it was very doubtful whether the Spanish nation, even if as generally inspired with patriotic ardour as it is possible for any nation to be, and carrying to its utmost practicable extent the principle of rising in a mass, could have met the invader with a force numerically equal to what he could without much difficulty bring, considering the immense number of his veterans at every moment in the posture of war, the authority and promptitude of his decrees of conscription, and the vast extent of populous territory over which those conscriptions operate. And as to the nature of this popular levy, it was to be considered what an uncouth element of armies it would continue to be for months, what a want there was of men of commanding military talents, to throw the rude though brave masses into system, and at the same time how soon their quality, and the capacity of their leaders, were likely to be brought to the test by the unremitting assault of their rapid and pertinacious enemy. It was also to be inquired, where were the arms and magazines? whence were half the requisite

number of fire-arms to be obtained? for as to other arms there can be no greater folly than to talk of them. Possibly there are, in every country, a very small number of men so firm and so fierce that, without any other weapons than pikes, they would resolutely advance to the encounter with musketry and artillery; but as to the generality of the men that armies must be composed of, we think their defeat is infallible, whatever their numbers may be, if under no other protection than their pikes they are confronted with lines of fire-arms. For, setting aside the real difference of power between the two kinds of weapons, setting aside too the effect of manœuvres, the influence of *imagination* will be great and fatal. To unpractised troops, at least, guns seem something more than mere weapons; both by those that hold them, and those that meet them, it is almost felt as if they had a kind of formidable efficacy *in themselves*, their operation is so totally different from any other instrument that can be wielded by human hands. The explosion, the flash, and the infliction of death, at a great distance, by a missile that cannot be seen or avoided, inspire in the possessor of the weapon a certain consciousness of being a much more powerful agent, than he could have been by an implement, which had no other force than just that which he could give it by the grasp and movement of his hand, and no effect at a distance. And this influence of imagination operates with double force on the man who is advancing against these fire-arms, while himself has only an inert piece of wood or iron; he will look with despondency and contempt on his pointed stick, while the lines in his front seem to be arrayed in thunder and lightning, while he is startling at the frequent hiss of bullets, and seeing his companions begin to fall.

But there would be no end of enumerating the disadvantages under which the Spanish insurrection was to encounter such a tremendous invasion; and, even admitting that insurrection to be as general and as enthusiastic as it was represented, a sanguine expectation of its success was probably entertained by very few of our countrymen, after it was ascertained to the conviction of all that Bonaparte had nothing to fear on the side of Germany, though the earnest desire did sometimes assume the language of confident hope. Still, however, it was not the less certain, that

a great and resolute nation might accomplish wonders against the largest regular armies and the most experienced commanders; as history was at hand to show, by various examples, and eminently above all others, that of the war of the French revolution. Certainly, indeed, there was an ominous difference in point of genius and system between the leaders of the war against Spain and the commanders who had invaded France; the highest genius, however, cannot work literally by magic; and if the French legions could have been commanded by even still greater talents than those actually at their head, it was evident they must receive a dreadful shock if they were to be fallen upon by several hundred thousand men, impelled by the same enthusiasm of valour and obstinacy of perseverance which first confounded and finally routed the grand armies of Brunswick, Clairfait, and Saxe-Coburg; in the varieties of the conflict, besides, all the latent genius in the patriotic army would flame out, and declare whom nature had appointed, in contempt of all laws of rank, to the command. But then there must be an adequate *cause* to inspire the popular levies with this heroic fury, which should persist to burn and to fight, in spite of all checks and disasters, in fortress and in field, whether the battalions were in order or confusion, whether they found themselves separated into small bodies, or thrown together in a ponderous mass. And it might fairly be assumed, at the commencement of the Spanish revolution, that no less cause, no other cause, than that which had produced this grand effect in the French levy *en masse*, would now produce it in that of Spain. All know that the cause which operated thus on the revolutionary armies of France was the passion for liberty, continually inflamed to a state of enthusiasm, by having the object most simply and conspicuously placed in view. The object was placed before them, if we may so express it, "full-orbed;" it was liberty, not in the partial sense merely of being freed from the power and interference of the foreign monarchs who had sent the armies they were combating, and whose design, they had little doubt, it was to divide *France* among them as a conquest, and its people as slaves; but in the animating sense, also, of being no longer the *of a despot at home*. A general could circulate

through his camp an address like the following: "Brave citizens, soldiers of liberty! prepare for battle; to drive these legions of Austria and Prussia from your country, which is henceforth to be the land of freedom. Your ancestors, in such times as those of Louis XIV., were sent to war on these very plains, at the mandate of a cruel tyrant and his detestable minions; while they fought with a forlorn and melancholy valour, their countrymen were all in chains, and a grand object for which they were to fight and bleed was, that their master might lose none of his power to keep them so. You, soldiers of liberty, are called to celebrate in arms the commencement of a new era. By the heroic charge that shall dash these armies of insolent invaders in wrecks and fragments back on the countries from which they came, you will confirm the doom that has crushed the internal despotism of our country in the dust. The Bastille is down, there is an end of a profligate court and arbitrary power, of the exclusive rights and the arrogance of nobles, of the rapacity of farmers-general, and the domination of Papal priests. The impositions that so long fixed our slavery, by fettering our minds, are broken away; we have exploded the notions, as well as defied the power, of despotism; we have proclaimed that all political power essentially resides in the people, and that those to whom its exercise is to be entrusted shall be chosen by the people, and most strictly accountable to them. We are a part of this emancipated and elevated people, and are boldly come forth to maintain their cause and our own. Is it not worthy of us to be brave in such a cause? Does not this land of new-born liberty deserve that we should fight for it like lions? There, in our sight, are the armies that are come to make us all slaves again. Let us fall upon them directly, and drive them into the Rhine."

Every mind responded to such an appeal; though imperfectly organized at first, though in various instances unskillfully or unfaithfully commanded, and though many times in a state of confusion and defeat, these half-disciplined battalions were "fraught with fire unquenchable;" they astonished, and after a while intimidated, their former antagonists, by returning incessantly to the charge; they were continually re-enforced by more of their countrymen.

animated with the same powerful sentiment, till at length the most famous legions and generals of Europe were overpowered, and driven away by an irresistible torrent. We can remember to have read, in the accounts of those times, that one morning, after several days of severe conflict, and very partial success, in Alsace, General Pichegru signified to the army that he felt it needful to give them repose that day; on which he was informed that they testified their disappointment, and expressed a strong and general wish to be led again to battle: they were led accordingly. It would be as much beside the purpose to discuss here the correctness of that idea of liberty, which created such an almost preternatural energy in the people and the armies of France, as to notice what a wretched disappointment, and what a hateful despotism, were in reserve to terminate all their prospects. It is sufficient for our object, that a bold, grand idea of liberty, involving the annihilation of everything that had oppressed and galled the people, and sent their advocates to the Bastille, under the old despotism, and quite clear of all counteractive considerations of this and the other aristocratical distinction or monopoly to be held sacred, and this or the other individual or family to be maintained in power,—it is enough that this idea inspired the energy, which flung the relics of the invading armies at the palace gates of those who had sent them. It is enough that everyone can imagine in an instant, what would have been the effect in the camp of Jourdan or Pichegru, if information had come from Paris, of the provisional government, anxious to secure the rights and happiness of the people, having settled that, though neither a prince of Austria or Prussia, nor exactly Louis XVI., must be king, yet the allegiance of the nation was inviolably due to some individual of the family, the Duke of Chartres for instance, on whose accession the government would go on in the same wise and popular manner that it had done a hundred years past.

The reader has anticipated all we could say in the application of these hints to the recent movement of the Spanish people. We shall content ourselves with very few words, as there is now probably no great difference of opinion among thinking men, relative to the original and progres-

sive probabilities attendant on this memorable event. One single short question disposes of the whole speculation; Has liberty, in the sense in which alone it is of importance to a people, ever been fairly set before the Spanish nation? It is of the essence of this question, to reflect a moment on the condition of the Spanish nation previously to this event; we mean their condition as justly imputable to their own sovereigns, and their own system of government, exclusively of what evils may have accrued to them of late years from the French intrigues and ascendancy in their court. And according to all accounts, that condition was deplorable. Taken in a collective view, the people were ignorant, indolent, poor, dirty, and extravagantly superstitious, fond of tawdry shows and cruel sports, strangers, in a great measure, to ingenious and mechanic arts, stationary in almost all the points of civilization in which the other countries of Europe are advancing, hampered by a clumsy and perverse judicature, in short, bearing the most flagrant marks of an incorrigibly bad government. Thus matters had gone on during the reigns of successive monarchs, and during the reign of probably the last of the Bourbons in Spain, Charles IV. At length, in consequence of we know not what intrigues and private arrangements, the sovereignty passed suddenly from him into the hands of his son, not, of course, without expostulation and repugnance on the part of the father, whose rights, according to all orthodox notions on the subject, were grossly violated by the transfer. All this while, however, a powerful neighbour, whose tenets concerning kingly rights, saving and excepting those of himself and his royal brothers, are deemed highly heretical, had his schemes of transfer prepared, and his machines in operation; and lo! in a moment both the kings vanish from Spain, and "our brother Joseph" succeeds to the throne. It was found that the two monarchs had been fascinated, as we read of unfortunate birds sometimes being, to throw themselves directly into the mouth of the great serpent. At this juncture began the commotion which has so deeply and justly interested all Europe. A just indignation at the base and treacherous proceedings of Napoleon, rose so high, in some parts of the country, as to issue in an energetic call of the whole nation to arms. This was a tremendous

crisis, and a most awful summons; for it might be held certain, that the enemy, defied and challenged in this unexpected quarter, and this new manner, would discharge the whole collected thunders of his martial empire, and even if unsuccessful, would desperately prosecute the contest with the last battalion that would adhere to his standard. And if such would be his determination, what a scene the patriots had before them! If the emergency should prove to require it, he would be able, at a moderate computation, to bring three hundred thousand soldiers, in successive armies, into Spain. It would be idle to calculate that such a force, a large proportion of it veterans accustomed to victory, and commanded by such a set of generals as never were combined in any other service, could be everywhere encountered, and finally repelled, by less than four or five hundred thousand of the patriots. And if the war should continue even no more than six or eight months, how many great battles would there be, besides the incessant course of partial actions and bloody skirmishes? Would it have been at all an extravagant prediction that, during so many months of such a war, two hundred thousand devoted Spaniards might perish? And then what miseries would be suffered by the defenceless inhabitants, what numbers of aged and sick persons, and women and children, would be exposed to terror, to want, and in many cases even to death; what desolation of the country, what destruction of habitations, what ruin of agriculture, and what famine, as the probable consummation of all! This picture is inexpressibly too faint for the prospect, which was, or ought to have been, distinctly presented to the minds of those who first summoned, and all who seconded them in summoning, their countrymen to combat with the whole power of France. Now then, we may ask, solemnly, what was that OBJECT, for the attainment of which the country was to be laid open to this most gigantic and enormous train of horrors? What was that ultimate transcendent felicity, the thought of which was to inspire such multitudes of men with the perfectly new sentiment, a contempt of wounds and death; which was to animate the mothers, wives, sisters, and daughters of those men to urge them on to battle, and which was to

reconcile the whole population to have their country placed, for months in a situation about parallel to that of a forest infested by tigers? At the very least, that object could be no less than the noblest system of national liberty that ever blessed any people.

Let our readers recall to mind the manifestoes and addresses to the people, issued by the provincial Juntas that took the lead, and judge whether this *was* the object. Some of those publications were strongly conceived, and eloquently expressed. They powerfully expatiated on the treacherous arts by which the nation and the royal family had been inveigled, on the excesses committed in some places by the French troops, and on the glory of revenge; on which last topic we regretted to see the patriots adopting a language and endeavouring to rouse a spirit of savage ferocity, fit only for the most barbarous age. But the accomplishment of revenge could be only a very subordinate object with the patriotic Juntas; nor could it be expected to prove an object adequate, in those parts of the country which had not immediately suffered or witnessed the outrages committed by the French, to stimulate the population to turn their meadows into fields of battle and expose their persons to the sword; especially as it would be obvious that as soon as Joseph should be enthroned, the excesses of the French must, even for his sake, cease. What, then, it must still be asked, was the grand ultimate object to be attained by so dreadful a war, even presuming it must be successful? And, as far as we have at any time been able to discover, the grand, the sublime object, which was to animate the people to such a warfare, to compensate its infinity of miseries, and to crown the final victory, was no other than *a return to the old state of things*, with the mere exception of French influence, and the mischievous power of the Prince of the Peace, at the Spanish court. None of the indispensable innovations, none of the grand reforms, for the want of which that people had been so long pitied or despised by all the civilized world, were specifically held out, as any part of the incitement or the prize; no limitations of the royal power, or the royal expenses, no reduction of the privileges of the aristocracy, no restraints on ecclesiastical arrogance, no political existence to be given to the people.

no method of enabling them to participate or influence government, no abrogation of the barbarous municipal regulations, against the freedom of trade, no improvement of political economy that should contribute to supply clothes to those in rags, and food to those almost starving. No, there was nothing of all this held out to the people; they were to draw on them, to fight, and to expel the whole power of France at the dreadful cost that we have described, and then Ferdinand and the old government were to be triumphantly restored, and all would be well! Hundreds of thousands of them were summoned to rush out gallantly to perish, in order that the remainder might continue to be the poor, ragged, forlorn nation that they were and are.

If a project for exciting the people to plunge into an unfathomable gulf of miseries and death for such an object, may be forgiven to the statesmen and prelates of Spain, whose Catholic imaginations are so stored with prodigies and miracles, what, however, will sober judges hereafter say of the politicians of England at the memorable juncture? By what reach of conjecture will it be possible to explain, how they, the enlightened inhabitants of a free country, in which they have so often eloquently declaimed on the glory of having permitted no despotism here, on the energy with which noble ideas of liberty will inspire a people to resist the armies of a tyrant, and on the wretchedness of living under a government like that of Spain; in what way can it be made intelligible, how these enlightened politicians should conceive it possible to rouse a whole people to arms, at the peril of such awful consequences, by any objects held out to them by the Juntas? or should deem it a desirable thing if they could,—excepting, indeed, with the mere view of diverting the danger a while longer from our own country, and giving, in our stead, Spanish victims to the French sabres.

What was Ferdinand, or any other individual, to the unhappy people of Spain, who were to leave their families, to have their cottages burnt, to famish, or to bleed for his sake? What had he ever done for them, or attempted to do? If he had been a thousand times more their friend than they had ever found him to be, by what law of justice or common sense could it be, that countless multitudes

should go to be slaughtered on his account?—not to notice the absurdity of summoning a nation to fight for a person who was, as to any possible connexion with them, to all intents a nonentity.

For a while, we still hoped that the name of Ferdinand would be suffered to sink, by degrees, out of the concern; and that the project would assume, at length, the bold aspect of a really popular cause. In this hope, we anxiously waited the assembling of the Supreme Junta. At last they assembled, verified their powers, and took the oath which they had solemnly framed. We read that oath, and have never since, for one instant, entertained the smallest hope of the Spanish cause. There were some most vague and insignificant expressions in that oath, about taking care of the interest of the nation; but its absolute sum and substance was, Popery and Ferdinand. The first of these, avowed in its utmost extent and grossness, we considered, as we have already attempted to explain, as enough to ensure the fate of the whole design, on account of its aspect relatively to the divine government; and the latter, as furnishing far too insignificant a motive to animate a nation to battle. The Junta began by declaring they had no power to assemble the Cortez, in other words, that they could do nothing for the people; they went on to restrict the freedom of the press, and now,—the world is ceasing to inquire what they are doing.

No room remains for remarks on the measures of our government, relating to the vast preparations and armies professedly intended for the assistance of Spain; what is worse, we have no room for adding many remarks on the book which has given occasion to this article.

The Cid (i. e., Lord) Rodrigo Diaz, was a most renowned hero of the eleventh century, who was sometimes in the service of the Christian monarch of Spain, and sometimes maintained himself independent in his conquests from the Moorish part of the country. There are several ancient records, and an epic poem concerning him in the Spanish language; Mr. Southey has formed the present work, by combining and harmonizing the several relations together, faithfully translating, as he assures us, what he has selected from each, and noting, in the margin of each paragraph, the

work, and the part of the work from which it is taken. The translation is in the antiquated English dialect, which appears to us to be, in general, pretty successfully supported.

The story is something between a history and a romance; and Mr. Southey has not attempted to distinguish what is true from what is fabulous; the Spanish literature even supplied no means for doing this, nor would it have been worth while, had it been practicable, as the fabulous parts are probably quite as amusing as the true, and give as striking a picture of the times. In this view, the work is very interesting. We are transported into an age and country where the gentlemen go out to work in the morning, with their steeds and lances, as regularly as the farmers with their team and plough, and, indeed, a good deal more so. The Cid surpasses all his contemporaries for diligence and success in such laudable occupation. His course of enterprise is so rapid, so uniformly successful, and so much of a piece in other respects, that in some parts of the book the mind is quite tired of following him. In many other parts, however, the narrative is eminently striking, especially in describing some of the single combats, and most of all, in the long account of an extraordinary court of justice, held on two young princes or noblemen, who had abused their wives, the daughters of the Cid. Nothing in the whole library of romantic history can exceed this narrative. The Cid appears a humane warrior, according to the standard of those times, and yet he could calmly be guilty of the most infernal cruelties; for instance, burning alive many Moors, in the siege of Valencia. The destruction of "infidels," indeed, in any and every manner, seems to have been regarded as one of the noblest exercises of Christian virtue. Three or four of his constant companions in arms display such magnanimous bravery, and such affectionate fidelity to him, as to excite the reader's interest and participation in no small degree. A prominent feature of the story throughout, is the frequent recurrence of religious and superstitious ideas, in the discourse of the warriors, in all situations.

SYDNEY SMITH'S SERMONS.

Two Volumes of Sermons. By the REV. SYDNEY SMITH, M.A.,
late Fellow of New College, Oxford; Rector of Foston, in York-
shire; Preacher at the Foundling, and at Berkeley and Fitzroy
Chapels. 8vo. 1809.

A SPECIES of infelicity, with which we do not remember to have seen any adequate expressions of sympathy, is that of a minister of religion who is not cordially pleased with his office. The persons, claiming on this ground the benevolent sentiment, might be divided into several classes; but we do not, at present, solicit it for those, who have such a disproportionate share, and such a parsimonious reward of clerical duty, as to droop under the hourly sense of toil and poverty; nor for those (if any such there be), who can but ill brook the restraints of professional decorum on irregular dispositions; nor yet for those who are oppressed by a desponding view of the inefficacy of their labours. There is another class, to which the friendly commiseration is perhaps equally due. We should probably come near the right description of this class, if we were briefly to sketch any one of the several instances that have fallen in our way in the course of our long life. Nor should we be exhibiting any thing that is not familiar to the observation of many of our readers, if we were to represent the ecclesiastical condition and feelings of a young man, not born to the privilege of an independent fortune, but liberally educated, genteel in his address, and in all his tastes and ideas, possessed of very considerable talents, accompanied with the arrogance arising from his opinion that they are quite extraordinary ones, and submitting somewhat reluctantly to the circumstances which fix his destiny to the clerical profession. Why reluctantly? From causes which have naturally a most powerful influence on a spirited and proud young man. He finds that the church is the most favourite topic of ridicule among the far greater proportion of both the young and old men of fortune, fashion, spirit, and talent. While on this topic even dulness can contrive to be almost smart, he finds that no small share of the real wit and humour, which kindle the glee of gay

and genteel companies, crackles and sparkles from lucky hits at the church. He is repeatedly mortified in such companies, by sly inuendoes at his own destination, and arch apologies for those inuendoes being sometimes too obvious. He is not less mortified to witness the kind of respect, sometimes practised in such society, towards the ecclesiastical order in the person of one of its members; a respect exhibited in occasional affectations of extra decorum (particularly as to the article of profane language) in consideration of his being present, followed and explained by pleasant experiments how far he will quietly suffer this decorum to be violated, and by exulting looks of challenge to rally in its defence when some gallant son of Mars puts it entirely to the rout. Nor will our spirited undergraduate feel the situation of the reverend gentleman much more enviable, when the squire or the knight, with a grin, refers to him some question of moral casuistry, while the counsellor and the physician make some leering compliment to the authority which his opinion derives from his spiritual function.

It is with extreme vexation, that this incipient divine recollects all the current malicious jests about a very ordinary share of ability sufficing for the church; about its being the destination of the less mercurial branches of the family who would have no chance of succeeding in any department demanding acuteness or enterprise; its being the convenient receptacle for the humble third cousins of persons of distinction, and the like. It mortifies him still more deeply to observe, that though there is at all times a grand aggregate of talent in the church, yet those brilliant exhibitions of genius and wit, of eloquence or science, which command the admiration of the whole country, are chiefly made on the secular field. The condition of the laymen excites his envy, even by their having to claim the most distinguished of the infidel corps; and without really approximating to their principles, he is tempted to like his religion and his church somewhat the less, for their having been held in scorn by these *fine spirits*. In surrendering himself to an institution and profession, from which so vast a host of talent have at all times kept aloof with the pride of showing a freer and ampler ground for their operation, he is imperfectly consoled by recounting the names and

appropriate epithets of the judicious Hooker, the witty South, the scientific and eloquent Barrow, and the profound Butler. He murmurs at his stars, and revolts at putting on the sacred habiliments, while each journal is recalling his attention and admiration to the examples of forensic and parliamentary eminence, or to the brilliance of martial achievements; or if his ambition takes chiefly a literary direction, he has the greatest difficulty to pacify his pride, when forced to recollect how few of the great philosophers, historians, and poets, have been churchmen. Oh! that Locke, and Pope, and Gibbon (his scepticism notwithstanding), had been rectors, deans, or bishops; or that I had been privileged to affix to my name in the title-pages of my future performances that mark of independence and secularity, *Esq.*!—But even if his mind could divest the clerical character of these associated ungracious recollections of the immense number of able men, who never thought, and many of whom he is mortified to reflect would have scorned to think, of assuming it, he has but little complacency in the very nature of the profession. He feels as if the office and character of a priest were something akin to a formality, a mechanical order, exceedingly uncongenial with the varying, and, as he deems it, energetic activity of the mind. Much of the required service he is disposed to regard as routine; and therefore he anticipates a sense of wearing and painful monotony. His pride, or as he calls it, his intellectual independence, struggles violently against submitting to be bound up by a system of complete prescription, by which he is solemnly interdicted all option or change in opinions, ceremonial observances, and even personal attire. He knows that the public does not regard an ecclesiastical situation as anything of the nature of an arena for either proving superior ability, or training it. Not a very large share is in general, as in many secular offices, peremptorily demanded, or even expected; and therefore there is but a very faint degree of that stimulus to excellence, which in other departments is involved in the very fact of possessing the office. He foresees a deficiency of anything tending to exhilarate his imagination; as all the provision for it in ecclesiastical ornaments, movements, or even music, affords but little variety, and has already lost its effect through familiarity. And then as to

the chief matter of all, the influential communication of divine knowledge to an assembly of human beings, he does not feel such an affecting impression of the importance of this instruction and the infinite value of these rational beings, as to save him from the apprehension that he shall find it a very dull and tiresome task to discourse again and again on what are necessarily become in a Christian country some of the most trite of all topics.

No rich uncle bequeaths a fortune and opportunely demises; no fortunate casualty of introduction to persons of high rank; no intimacy with the sons of political chieftains, in or out, suggests a chance of the honours and emoluments of the state; a preparation for the law would be a long course of heavy toil and expense, with an exceedingly dubious prospect of success; in short, the time arrives when our young genius must take upon him the indelible character, which assigns him to a class that he has never admired, and shuts against him for ever the highest theatre in which ambitious talent aspires to figure. It is not wonderful, if he accomplishes his formal and solemn dedication to the sacred function with nearly such feelings, as we may have perceived in an elegant and tolerably proud young man, whom the parsimony of his fortune had brought to the altar with a disagreeable and ancient, but wealthy dame. Thus dedicated, it becomes a question which of the several roads to distinction within the liberties of his profession he will decide to adopt. There would be no wonder to see him soon present himself as a most zealous champion of the ecclesiastical institution, extending his array of defensive hostility along its whole range, from its most solemn doctrines to its minutest ceremonial appointments. And in this case he will apply himself assiduously to theological and polemical studies, and will not fail to become furnished with opinions, very definitely conceived, whether impartially formed or not, on most of the points that have been discussed or controverted among the divines of the present and preceding ages. But, as we have reported him a gentlemanly young man with much address and not a little assurance, a different course is within his choice; less promising, we should suppose, of ultimate preferment and prolonged attendance with as much more to flatter such a man

as with less to fatigue. Some favourable juncture will be afforded for his *début* in a large city, where a great number of most genteel and fashionable persons understand there is some obligation on them, especially as George III. is on the throne, to pay a Sunday compliment to the *religion of their country*. Under this conscience of obligation both to the church and the state, they would perhaps discharge the duty, rather than forfeit the repute, even in temples where the officiating persons were defective in the graces both of address and composition. But who would not be happy to lose the irksomeness of duty, in the pleasure of being religious, though this should lessen their merit in the article of self-denial? And really these good Christians must in their hearts, be a little heathenishly given, if they should immoderately regret the concert, the opera, or even the Royal Institution, while performing their devotions in a place, where the minister, with an elegant appearance, and graceful gesture, and bland delivery, and brilliant touches, and philosophical elucidations, gently invites, for a very short space of time, to the newest and most tasteful mode of religion, the attention of an auditory shining in wealth, blooming in beauty, and dazzling in fashion; a place, where the proudest need not apprehend being mixed with the vulgar, where the most dashing may deem it worth while to exhibit, where the most rational will be safe from Methodism, and where infidels will not be ashamed to have heard a sermon.

Thus to promote the Christian worship, which is so apt to be regarded as a piece of very dull, though prudent, routine observance, almost to the rank of an amusement; and, in effecting this, to be himself the centre of attraction to a portion of the choicest taste, beauty, and fashion, in a metropolis, may well cause the accomplished minister no little self-complacency and elation. Yes, to have inspired the church to a competition with the theatre! to have threatened Kemble with rivals in the Apostles! to have provoked all the gods and muses, that preside over the polished vanities of a great city, to envy at the name even of Christ! this far transcends the achievement of the illustrious hero, who raised the despised Bœotia to a rivalry with all that was most powerful in Greece. No doubt the

fortunate preacher's imagination will greatly exaggerate the effect, and magnify the extent, of his operations; and he will be averse to reflect how much larger a share of beauty and fashion, than that which confers its smiles on him, and how much richer an aggregate of taste, accomplishment, and rank, exists in the capital, without paying him any attention, without knowing him or even thinking of him: nor can he like to acknowledge to himself, how many more persons would deprecate a final cessation of the exhibitions of Cooke and Mrs. Jordan, than would be sorry for the cessation of his. Let him be duly guarded against the intrusion of such considerations, and he will receive the most lively gratification from the attention and flatteries of a numerous and elegant circle of national Christians; who will surely be right in bestowing their favour on a person, who saves them from the oppressive dullness incident to Sunday duty, and in part from the ridicule of those who are too gay or free to make any conscience at all about the matter. If he combines with these ecclesiastical merits the talents and graces that animate the social party, he will find himself in much closer contact, if we may so express it, with his fame,—will enjoy a more immediate and concentrated brilliance of smiles and compliments, than if he were prosecuting all the labours, with all the vigour, of Warburton.

One signal advantage attending this favourite of ambitious fortune will be, the privilege of omitting to study a great many subjects which our eminent divines have deemed of the essence of theology. Almost all that doctrine which constitutes the peculiar character, and which may at last be found to constitute also the stamina and vital essence, of Christianity, *must* be left out of his ministrations, and therefore may as well be left out of his studies. It is a harder tax on ingenuity and caution, than any benefit likely to arise from such an exercise of them is worth, to proceed with impartial and serious thought through the Scriptures, and the writings of our most venerated divines in and out of the Established Church, without being misled into some few of the notions now called "Methodistical;" and if our favourite evangelist of the polished and the fair, after having been seduced to adopt

any of these notions, were in evil hour betrayed to express them, it is easy and curious to imagine what a look of surprise, quickly followed by a sullen blackness of visage, would take the place of that aspect of amenity which before so gently beamed on him from his whole auditory; and how vainly his accustomed wit and graces might be exerted to play him back into favour in the genteel society of which he had been so regaled with the flatteries.

To be sure, it is possible for a man to be a learned theologian without being a Methodist. Setting out with a resolute and laudable prejudgment against all those interpretations of revealed religion which are sometimes denominated evangelical, he may investigate the whole theory with the express design of advancing opposite opinions systematically on every point. But, besides that some questions both of decorum and prudence would be involved in this regular warfare against the articles and the most revered divines of our church, it would be altogether useless and unacceptable in ministering to those devout Christians, whose partiality we have predicted for the pink of sacerdotal spruceness. They do not want to hear theological lectures of *any* school. Even the delight of seeing Methodism exploded would be bought too dear, at the price of listening half an hour to a discussion of the doctrine of justification. What they want is, to steal from the institutions of religion an apology for thinking very little about religion itself; what they attend to must be constituted religion and must constitute them sufficiently religious in virtue of its being attended to in a consecrated place, under the presiding wisdom and devotion of a consecrated man, and amidst the paraphernalia of piety; and the performance, being *thus* secured to be of a perfectly religious quality, may be allowed to avoid all statement of doctrines purely religious, and the more carefully it does so the more agreeable. It would certainly, as we remember a fashionable ecclesiastic pertinently remarking, be somewhat of a "bore" to insist on such things, while there are so many pleasant matters of taste and sentiment at the preacher's choice.

This exemption from the duty of severe theological study will give our divine the more advantage for figuring, if he

should desire it, as a man of letters, which will be a great additional recommendation. In this character, we can hardly guess how he will be likely to deport himself with respect to religion. But we should rather expect to find him, when associating with wits, politicians, and philosophers, painfully envious of that freedom which they have not submitted to be cramped in canonicals; and not more nice than some of them in the choice of expedients to shino. If, as a writer, he should feel insupportably impatient of the proprieties imposed on the language of a gentleman and a member of the reverend body, he may indulge his genius anonymously; and we know not whether we ought to be surprised, if we should detect him, under this mask, forswearing all his factitious elegance and refinement, railing in low diction against some of the worthiest of mankind, and repeatedly betraying his implacable quarrel with his destiny by ridiculing the clerical character.

This last employment will be a truly painful sport to him; and he will be sadly mistaken if he should fancy that it will be a recommendation in the view of some clever, and not over religious men, with whom he may be ambitious to hold a literary or a convivial connexion, and by whom he takes care to be recognized in the anonymous exhibition. Instead of admiring what he may wish them to consider as the fine free spirit far above his profession, they will despise the meanness which can assert the full claims, and take all the advantages of the profession, and at the same time be anxious to show them, in a confidential way, that he can sneer at it with as good a will as themselves. But whatever he may think necessary for his credit with the initiated, he will surely take every precaution that his clerical brethren and the public shall not be apprised how much the bad part of society are indebted to him for burlesquing serious subjects, for fanaticism and slander against Christian zeal, and for examples of a coarse and bullying language. Nor surely can he let his vanity so baffle his prudence, as to compel his ecclesiastical superiors to hear of him as a meddler with matters of political party, and the maker of squibs against the policy of the church in points of which it is immoderately tenacious. If he should be so far abandoned of his discretion, we cannot choose but anticipate the melan-

choly consequence; the day will come when this bright form of genteel spirituality, this light of the fine and of the fair, after sparkling for some years about the metropolis, will be smitten away by the crosier of the diocesan; and flying toward the north like a meteor, hissing but lessening as it flies, will quickly vanish from every bright eye that has been accustomed to reflect its lustre, and is turned to observe its departure. And will not an incurable sorrow take possession of those devout Christian souls, that are thus deprived of their instructor and pattern? Why no; there will be a new fashion, a new opera, or a new singer; and if the gentle belles *must* still be religious, some other elegant *cicerone* of Zion will soon present himself to attend them just as far in the amusements of piety as it may be modish for them to go.

This slight picture has been formed, by combining our recollections of several real instances that have come within our observation at different times and places; and we shall not pretend to conjecture how far it may bear any resemblance to the very popular divine, to whom the public are indebted for the two volumes before us. They do, however, tempt us to fancy a likeness in one particular, the indifference to theological studies. They appear to us to give palpable indications of a mind, rarely and reluctantly applied to the investigation of either the specific doctrines, or the general principles, of the theory of revealed religion. It will be doubted by the most candid readers, whether the author has ever taken the pains to ascertain the sense of the articles, which, as a clergyman he has subscribed, or even to impose a sense upon them; to examine the opinions of the most celebrated divines of the church, or to deduce for himself a scheme of faith from the Bible. He may by chance in the library of some veteran theologian, have glanced on bodies of divinity, and huge tomes of theological controversy and biblical exposition; and in disgust at such dry and endless toils, have decided that the science of religion was never intended for men of taste. Besides, a large proportion of those doctrines, which divines have very commonly maintained and expatiated on as parts of the Christian system, are now convicted of "Methodism," and therefore require no further examination. From whatever cause it is, the

matter of these Sermons is more disconnected than we have witnessed, as we think, in any other instance, with theological doctrines of one school or of another. And when the topic in hand essentially involves any of them, the discourse often proceeds boldly forward in a complete ignorance of this essential point, and now and then does worse by an awkward and unknowing mode of recognizing it. There is no definable system of faith inherent, if we may so express it, in this large body of professedly Christian instruction. We are not here taking on us to decide precisely *what* scheme of principles a preacher ought to have fixed in his mind; but we do think, that since it is impossible for him to confine himself wholly to subjects involving no point of religious theory, he should take the trouble to settle his judgment on the principal parts of that theory, so far at least as to make him consistent and intelligible when he is occasionally forced near them by stress of his subject.

Some agreeable and instructive authors of the clerical profession, in whom we have observed a very serious dissent from what appears to us, and has appeared to many of the most eminent divines, the revealed theory of religion, have been, however, very careful, that whatever they said on religious subjects should be conformed to *some* standard of opinion; aware of the indecorum, to use no other term, of flinging off at perfect random sentiments in which Christian truth is necessarily implicated. The present writer, in utter contempt of any such rule of propriety, will, for the sake of saying a spirited thing, hazard (and indeed without seeming sensible that the hazard is of any consequence) an utter violation of *any* scheme of doctrine entertained as truth by any class of professed believers in Christianity. As one instance from a hundred, he describes a hospital as being "ample enough to call down the blessings of God on a city, and wipe out half their sins." (Vol. I. p. 127.) We should think there is no class denominated Christian, that would avow a creed compatible with such a doctrine as this.

There are, however, a very few points of faith, to which all the carelessness of our preacher does not prevent him from most steadily adhering. One of them is, of course, that all hopes of the divine favour are to be founded on *human* merit. This is everywhere assumed in the most

broad and uncereemonious manner, unaccompanied (and it is so much the better) with any unmeaning pretence of ascribing something to the sacrifice of Christ. Indeed, on this one point of the Christian doctrine he appears to have been at rather more than usual pains to form an opinion; for he asserts, precisely, that

"It is contrary to the repeated declarations of the Gospel, it is derogatory to the attributes of the Deity, to suppose that Jesus Christ dwelt among men for any other purpose but to show them that rule of mortal life which leads them to life eternal."—Vol. ii. p. 252.

If there were any portion of these volumes, or anything in their general character, that could be fairly construed into an opposite doctrine to that which is here avowed or implied, we should be quite willing to attribute such a passage, either to complete carelessness of expression on theological points, or to that studied inaccuracy, which we can remember to have seen occasionally resorted to by smart ecclesiastics, as an expedient for averting the imputation of having been so dull and clerical as to occupy their thoughts about the articles of a creed: we should be prompt to take the matter in whichever of these ways should be the most complaisant to the writer. But the whole tenor of these Sermons accords with the opinion so obviously avowed in this passage. Now, we suppose nobody will dispute that a layman, or a dissenting teacher, is perfectly at liberty, so far as his accountableness to any human authority is concerned, to avow his rejection of that economy of redemption which is founded on the propitiatory sacrifice of Christ; but, even after all we have seen, we feel some little remaining capacity of wondering, when we find this done in a bold unqualified manner, by a minister who holds his situation in virtue of having subscribed, *ex animo*, the articles of the Established Church, and who takes occasion, in one of these Sermons, to insist on the necessity of articles and subscription for preserving the integrity of the faith! All will admit, we presume, that an opinion, which disclaims the doctrine of a real atoning sacrifice in the death of Christ, cannot be advanced but in direct contradiction to the sense of our articles, to the judgment of those who framed them.

and to the opinions of the grand body of the divines of the church who have held and enforced them ever since. It is plainly a rejection of what has always been of the very essence of the object intended by the national mind, in maintaining the religious establishment.

The principle renounced is of such magnitude, and has such an effective relation with every part of the scheme of faith, that its rejection does no less than pronounce that the institutes of the church are substantially false and absurd in their bearing on that very concern, which alone makes it of any material consequence for human beings to have a religion at all,—their acceptance before the Divine Justice, and their eternal salvation; and that, as to the grand *principle* of the theory of that acceptance and salvation, the shieks and imaums of Constantinople have a doctrine incomparably more rational and more consistent with the attributes of the Divine Being. What judgment must we then be compelled to form of those persons who can submit to purchase the privileges of the church, and among them that of proclaiming from the pulpits of the church itself, that these its sacred institutes are false and absurd, at the price of solemnly avowing in the presence of God their belief that these institutes are true? And what must we be reduced to think of the administration of the church? Must we at last be driven to confess that a man has only to give a solemn pledge of adherence to one form of doctrines, to be richly remunerated for preaching, and with the approbation or connivance of those ecclesiastical superiors to whom he is amenable, any doctrine he pleases,—except perhaps that reputed “methodism,” which forms the distinguishing character of the articles which he has subscribed? Is it possible to conceive a state of things that should more imperiously call for reformation? Is it exactly in the institutions of religion that we are to sanction, as innocent and honourable, that trifling with principle and obligation which in any other department would be regarded with abhorrence? We are not unaware of the subterfuges under which ingenious men, and in imitation of them men not ingenious, have endeavoured to protect their consciences; in which endeavour we have often seen them but very partially successful; and if the

success has in some cases been complete, we are greatly afraid it has, in every such instance, been at an expense at which any privileges of any institution in the world are much too dear.

In these Sermons, the idea of an atonement by the death of Christ being dismissed from our faith, there is a laudable inquiry for any competent substitute; and a necessary inquiry, since it cannot be denied that all men have sinned. Substitutes are easily found; building a hospital, as we have seen, will atone for half the sins of a city; repentance is called an atonement; it is said that restitution "eases our shoulders from the burden of sin, appeases the restless anger of conscience, and renders the mind cheerful and serene," and is of virtue sufficient to "have pacified both God and man." "The pleasure of forgiving," it is said, "is a pleasure ever recurring, causing a man to love and respect himself, breathing a satisfaction over the whole of life, remembered the hour before dissolution, offered up to God as an atonement for sin." (Vol. II. p. 148.) We do not anywhere find that our divine thought it necessary to prove that God will accept these offerings as satisfactory for this purpose, or to suggest any expedient for neutralizing the consequences of our wilful mistake, if it should too late be found that He has rejected them. The chief comfort, perhaps, in the contemplation of that hazard, is furnished by the assurance which the hearers and readers are taught to entertain, that a tolerable proportion of mankind will but little need the benefit of any atonement at all: this assurance is administered, if we rightly understand, in a passage where the preacher represents it as weakness to be afraid of death if the "life has not been notoriously wicked." (Vol. II. p. 291.)

Though our author is no friend to that religious theory which represents man, while prosecuting the great design of obtaining eternal felicity, as running extravagantly in debt to the divine mercy,—and is very properly of opinion, that this ambitious expectant, having the means of making respectable payments as he goes on in the sterling material of goodness, repentance, and the like, ought to behave handsomely in the affair; yet we must do him the justice to say, he is far from being such an adorer of the excellence

of human nature as some fashionable divines. Then and then his observant shrewd sense has a momentary glimpse into this superstition, and he speaks as if he discerned diverse celestial beauties and godlike qualities in that nature; but the illusive shape and gloss soon vanish from the form and features of the god, and leave our author to pourtray (and he often does it in a very striking manner) the various phases of a depraved being. Indeed, the whole effect of the display of the human nature and condition in these volumes, though contrary to the writer's intention, is extremely sombre, so much so, that we have been prompted to turn even to Baxter and Boston to relieve our gloomy impressions. What other impression could we receive, from being brought to contemplate an accountable creature full of radical vicious propensities; liable to be overgrown, and generally, in fact, as much overgrown, even early in its existence, with bad and tyrannical habits, as trees with moss; incessantly, and on all sides, tempted to become worse and worse; condemned, notwithstanding, to regulate by the measure of its deserts its expectations beyond death; unaided, in the exertions for vanquishing evil, and attaining excellence, by any special divine influence, unprotected by a particular providence, and doomed to surrender itself, at death, to an entire extinction of consciousness, till the resurrection?

The last particular in this melancholy sketch is not, that we remember, put in the explicit form of a proposition; but we must once more complain of a most unaccountable carelessness of expression, if it is not meant to be implied in such expressions as these:—

"The feelings of bodily decay often lead to repentance; it happens, fortunately for man, that he is not called out of the world in the vigour of health, not by a sudden annihilation, but by a gradual destruction of his *being*."—Vol. I. p. 24.

"This makes a parent delight in his children, and repose on them, when his *mind* and his body are perishing away."—P. 148.

"They are gone, the grave hides them, and all that remains of father and of mother, are the dust and the ashes of their tombs."—P. 152.

"The happiness of the dead, however, is affected by none of these; nor is it such circumstances that can disturb their

profound repose ; they are slumbering in the dust, unconscious of the mouldering scene around them, &c. —P. 118.

In explaining the illustration taken from the seed of wheat, the preacher represents St. Paul, who undoubtedly believed himself discoursing on the changes of the body, to have really meant changes of the soul. "So also," says the great apostle, "it is with the soul of man ; it will be changed as the seed is changed." "This comparison between the outward world, and the changes of the soul, set on foot by the holy apostle," &c. (Pp. 266, 267.) It is but fair to notice that a few pages forward we find this sentence: "these faculties show us that the soul is now young and infantine, springing up into a more perfect life when the body falls into the dust."

One of the longest sermons is an animated invective against Methodism ; and we most cordially join in the preacher's indignation, as every reader of sense will do, when he sees the description of that combination of qualities, of which this term is the substantive name. For the Methodists are distinguished by an "astonishing arrogance and presumption ; they speak as if a new dispensation had been accorded to the world, as if the time was at last arrived when they were permitted to show to mankind the true knowledge of the true God." "The gratification of this spiritual pride is become in fact one of their religious exercises ; it is mingled in all their religious meditations, and becomes the darling and consolation of their souls." Their "predominant notion of religion seems to be, that it is something removed as far from common sense as possible." They are actuated by a "fanaticism which it is no more possible to meet with the common efforts of reason, than it is to dispute with a burning fever, or to argue down a subtle contagion." "Nothing can be more mistaken than to look upon the frantic extravagance, or the undignified trifling of their teachers as innocent." Now such persons there certainly are in our country ; only we think our author betrays a great contempt of accuracy in calling them a "sect," and speaking of them as of modern origin, unless he were thinking particularly of the followers of Swedenborg. They should rather be called a *class*, some indi-

viduals belonging to which are to be found, and have at all times been found, in almost all denominations. Indeed he virtually acknowledges that the persons he has in view are no sect, by admitting that they agree substantially with the more moderate and judicious members of the church in the doctrines they maintain; the doctrines, therefore, of course, which he himself, as one of those moderate and judicious members, maintains. But here we are reduced to great perplexity about the denomination of Methodists as applied to such a class; for we had imagined, that in the fashionable dialect this was the distinctive designation for a class of religionists, who insist, with peculiar earnestness, on the atoning merits of Jesus Christ, on justification through faith in him, on the operations of the Holy Spirit, and on the blessings of a particular providence.

In our last number we suspended our review of these volumes in a considerable degree of perplexity, caused by several passages in the sermon against Methodism, and particularly by this:—

“In applying the term sect, to persons of this religious persuasion (the Methodists), and in distinguishing them from the Church of England, I do not found that distinction upon the speculative tenets they profess, but upon the general spirit they display; it is in vain to say you belong to our ancient and venerable communion, if you lose sight of that moderation for which we have always been distinguished, and instead of sameness of spirit give us only sameness of belief. You are not of us (whatever your belief may be), if you are not sober as we are; you are not of us, if you have our zeal without our knowledge; you are not of us, if those tenets which we have always rendered compatible with sound discretion make you drunk and staggering with the new wine of enthusiasm.”—Vol. I., p. 284.

Now, in this passage, the writer very clearly identifies his religious belief with the tenets of the Established Church, and then admits that the speculative doctrines of the Methodists also are identical with those tenets; and this is plainly saying, that in point of speculative religious opinions, he and the Methodists are agreed, the difference being only the spirit with which these opinions are maintained and applied. Here we were reduced to extreme perplexity

in attempting to guess what class of Christians it could be that our preacher has chosen to denominate Methodists. For we found *him* rejecting the doctrine of the atonement, rejecting and ridiculing the doctrine of a particular providence, and showing, by palpable implications, his disbelief of some other tenets, maintained as of the utmost importance by those who lay the most emphasis on these two doctrines. We were quite certain that any one of the classes usually called Methodists, would just as soon acknowledge themselves to be of the faith of Japan as to coincide with our preacher's notions of Christianity. And yet he has not signified that it is any *new* class of religionists against which he has felt it his duty to caution his auditors. Nor is it any new class, as far as we can by any means discover from the general tenor of his sermon.

It is hard that we have no possible way out of this difficulty but by breaking a wide gap through the preacher's sincerity. We looked this way in a former part of our observations, and we are forced towards the same point again. It is a signal piece of disingenuousness in this preacher to pretend to identify his opinions with the standard creed of the Established church. And what does excite our indignation not a little, we confess, is to see this done in such a manner as to seem an intentional wanton insult on that venerable establishment; the pretence being made, with an air of easy confidence, in a set of Sermons, in which it is not thought worth while to take the slightest trouble even to disguise the rejection and contempt of some of the most essential points of the instituted faith. We cannot preserve our patience to see our church treated thus by her professed sons and advocates. We seem to hear them say, "You see to what a plight the good old superannuated Establishment is reduced. She is like an old decrepit lady whose servants have a few ready cant phrases of deference, but laugh at her orders almost before they have closed the door of her room, and go and do everything just as they like, without in the least caring for the consequences of her being told how they are acting. The good old church has appointed plenty of creeds and confessions: we have set our names to a long list of articles full of the demerit of human works, full of a propitiatory sacrifice,

justification by faith, salvation by pure grace, and such kind of things. Yes, we have subscribed, ha! ha! ha! and gravely promised to hold forth these laudable fancies. This engagement having been made in all due form, and the ceremonial parts of the service being discharged in the prescribed manner, we easily find means to dupe our worthy old mistress; or if we cannot dupe her, or do not choose to take so much pains, we have nothing to fear in setting at nought her authority, as to what relates to her musty creeds. We shape our discourses and doctrines according to our own taste, or the fashion of the times; and thus we get the emoluments, and sometimes laugh and sometimes rail, as it may alternately suit our amusement or our interest, at those whose precious squeamish consciences will not let them obtain a share of our privileges, at the trifling cost of declaring their assent to what they do not believe." These gentlemen, however, know when to be demure again; and then, it is so venerable an institution! so faithfully supported! so formed for perpetuity! Then, each of them devoutly crosses himself, and chants, after this reverend precentor, "the church is not endangered by this denomination of Christians (the Methodists); I hope and believe that its roots are too deep, its structure too admirable, its defenders too able, and its followers too firm, to be shaken by this or any species of attack." (Vol. I. 290.) We cannot suppress our indignation at seeing this deliberate systematic practice of insult to the Establishment. And we would loudly warn, though we fear it will be of no avail to warn the church that all such men are traitors to her interests, and in effect conspirators against her life. Adhering in form to her communion, and possessing all its temporal privileges, they are notwithstanding decided, violent, super-libertine dissenters, beyond all comparison more alienated from her grand principles of faith, than thirty-nine in forty of those who are formally separated from her communion.

We intended some remarks on our reverend author's doctrine of Providence; but shall reserve them for an occasion which will require a brief attention to precisely the same notions, exhibited in almost literally the same language, in a short anonymous publication ascribed to the same author, and

not disavowed by him. That these notions are opposite to the Bible, is the very last argument, we suppose, that any reader of these sermons would think of suggesting to the writer of them; but it might have been expected he would not have been desirous to shut himself out from every respected school of philosophers.

If no publication ever came with more defective claims, in point of theological quality, than these sermons, we must employ a different language as to what they exhibit of intellectual ability and moral instruction. They display a great deal of acuteness, diversified mental activity, and independent thinking. Whatever else there is, there is no common place. The matter is sometimes too bad, sometimes too good, but always too shrewd, to be dull. The author is a sharp observer of mankind, and has a large portion of knowledge of the world. What is more, he has exercised much discriminative observation on the human heart, and often unfolds a correct view of its movements, especially the depraved ones. He has indicated in it so many native principles of pernicious operation, that if he cared about philosophical consistency he would turn orthodox at once; and be behind no "Methodist" of us all, in representing the necessity of an influence from heaven to purify so corrupt a source of agency. We have seen many instances of men choosing to be absurd philosophers, in order to avoid being sound divines. But did he not laugh outright in his study, when he was making sentences about "manly resolution," "noble pride," and other such things, as being the forces which were to subdue internal evil, and defeat, throughout a campaign of half a century, a world of temptations? We should indeed be sorry if he could be in so gay a mood when going to lead his auditors into so fatal an error; but we cannot conceive that he could avoid that perception of incongruity which usually excites the risible muscles. Really, notwithstanding all we have said, we think the man has more a Methodistical basis than half his clerical brethren. A man, who entertains *his* estimate of the condition of human nature, holds a principle which, by correct inference, precipitates the mind to despair on the one hand, or leads it towards the reprobated doctrines on the other; and it would be an admirable proof of "manly resolution,"

and "noble pride," to reject them because formalists, and schoolists, and profligates, and friblers, and divers other sorts of creatures, all wisely join to sneer at them, for the most part without so much as ever attempting to understand them!

The morality will often be, of course, very defective in principle, in works wherein the theology is so scanty and so erroneous. Making, however, the due allowance for this and for every other deteriorating cause, there will be found in these sermons a large share of valuable instruction. General principles of morals are sometimes developed with very original illustrations. The discriminations of right and wrong are often strongly marked. Moral agents are represented in a great diversity of situations, and many of those situations are brought forward into view very forcibly, by means of well-selected circumstances and strong coloring. The reader will observe that the moralist has the real world and the present times constantly in his view; his observations have the advantage of bearing a relation to facts; they are the moral lessons of a man who knows the world; they are pictures as well as precepts. In one of these discourses we are not so much listening to a formal lecture, as accompanying the moralist into some scene of human action, apposite to the topic he has chosen, and hearing him make a series of acute and spirited comments on the prominent circumstances as they present themselves. This prevents regular and extended discussion, but it throws peculiar force into particular passages. It casts the surface of the composition in points, generally sharp, and sometimes sparkling. It is to be noticed, at the same time, that his moral observations, while bearing so strong an impression of acquaintance with the real world, will in some instances be also found rather more accommodating to the world's standard of moral principles, than the moral speculations and instructions of a teacher would be who should qualify his knowledge of the world with an equally intimate knowledge of Christianity. It will easily be conjectured, that our present instructor will lay down his moral rules, at somewhat more than a sufficient distance from puritanical spirituality and austerity. Yet we find less reason to complain than we should have expected in moral reasonings so

little indebted directly to the light of true theology. A new proof is here afforded, that in a country, where Christianity is well known, those intelligent men who give it but very little attention, and who despise some of its leading principles, if they should ever have happened to hear them stated, have nevertheless acquired, insensibly and involuntarily, a much higher tone of moral sentiment than we find in the heathen philosophers. Our preacher's tone is sometimes very high; we were really surprised, as well as gratified to find him, for instance, giving no quarter to the love of praise as a motive of action.

"I mean by vanity, the excessive love of praise, and I call it excessive whenever it becomes a motive to action The vanity of great men, when it stimulates them to exertions useful to mankind, is that species of vanity, which seems to approach the nearest to virtue, and which we most readily pardon for its effects; and, indeed, so much are we inclined to view actions by their splendour, or their importance, rather than by their motives, that we can hardly agree to call by the name of vain, a man who has exercised consummate and successful ability upon great objects; whereas, there is a vanity of great, and a vanity of little minds, and the same passion regulates a ceremony, which saves, or ruins a kingdom. It is better, to be sure, that good (if it cannot be done for the best), should be done from any motive, rather than not be done at all; but the dignity of the fact can never communicate purity to the intention. True religion consists not only in action, but in the mind with which we act; and the highest beneficence which flows from vanity, though it may exalt us in the eyes of men, abases us in the view of God."

—Vol. II. p. 114.

A multitude of specimens might be extracted, of just and forcible thinking; we will transcribe only two or three, not as being preferable to many others, but as first occurring to our recollection. From a very striking Sermon on the bad "effect which a life passed in great cities produces on the moral and religious character," we might quote much more than the following passages:—

"It is not favourable to religious feeling to hear only of the actions and interference of men, and to behold nothing but what ingenuity has completed Out of great cities, there is everywhere around us a vast system going on, utterly independent

dent of human wisdom and human interference; and man learns there the great lesson of his imbecility and dependence But here everything is man, and man alone: kings and senates command us; we talk of their decrees, and look up to their pleasure; they seem to move and govern all, and to be the providence of cities; in this seat of government, placed under the shadow of those who make the laws, we do not render unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's, and unto God the things which are God's, but God is forgotten, and Caesar is supreme; all is human policy, human foresight, human power; nothing reminds us of invisible dominion and concealed Omnipotence; we do nothing but what man bids: we see nothing but what man creates; we mingle with nothing but what man commands; it is all earth and no heaven."

"The lesson which all ought to learn from principle, is often taught by poverty, sickness, and old age, and we are then most willing to rest upon a superior power, when we learn from experience the moral and physical evils by which we are surrounded, and the confined powers of our nature by which those evils are to be repelled. This lesson, however, is more slowly learnt in great cities than elsewhere, because there the strongest combination is formed against the accidents of life. It is there that every evil which can harass humanity, is guarded against by the most consummate experience, and rectified with the most perfect skill; whatever man has discovered to better his condition, is there to be found; and the whole force of human genius, called to the aid of each individual, gradually diminishes that conviction of human imbecility which is one cause of religious feeling"—Vol. II, p. 302.

We like the pointed, spirited cast of a paragraph in the Sermon on Repentance, and a similar one in the Sermon on Temptation—which we will place together.

"The great mean of making repentance efficacious, is by holding no parley with temptation; to hesitate is to consent; to listen is to be convinced; to pause is to yield. The soul of a penitent man should be as firm against future relapse, as it is sorrowful for past iniquity. The only chance for doing well, is to be stubborn in new righteousness! to hear nothing but on one side, and to be indebted for safety to prudence rather than to impartiality; above all things, to tremble for youthful virtue; not to trust ourselves, till we have walked long with God—till the full measure of his grace is upon us—till long abstinence has taught us to forbear—till we have gained such wide, and such true knowledge of pleasure, that we comprehend salvation and eternity in the circle of our joys."—Vol. I. p. 32.

"Then there must be no treaty entered into with the Tempter; no parley, no doubt, no lingering explanation; but clear denial, indicating calm and invincible resistance; for in this way the souls of men are lost to salvation; it seems innocent to listen, it is no crime to hear what the thing is; I can always deny, I can always retreat; I am still master of my own actions. But this is an error, for you cannot deny, or retreat, but at the first pause you were lost, and sin and death marked you for their own; it is madness to combat with the eloquence of sin, or to gaze at the pictures of passion; if you dispute with pleasure, she will first charm you to silence, then reason you to conviction, then lead you utterly from God; she wants you only to hear and see, she requires only one moment's pause, she knows if you can balance for a point of time between her present rapture and the distant felicity of heaven, that you are quite gone; you must meet temptation with blind eyes, and deaf ears, and with a heart which no more balances whether it shall be virtuous, than it does whether it shall send the blood of life through all the extremities and channels of the bodily frame."—Vol. II. p. 11.

We may cite the following passage, on the pleasure with which scandal is heard and circulated, as a proof of that talent of detecting human nature, which is often displayed in these volumes.

"There are many I believe, who are so far from listening to the means by which this satisfaction at the misconduct of others, may be checked, that they are rather inclined to doubt of the disorder, than to adopt the remedy. It wounds our pride as much to confess the fault, as it gratifies our pride to practise it. No man chooses to avow that he wants the faults of others, as a foil to his own character; no man has the desperate candour to confess, that the comparison which he draws between himself and his brother, upon hearing of any act of misconduct, is a source of pleasure; and that in such cases, the feelings of self overcome the rules of the Gospel; if you ask any man such a question, he will say, that he depends upon his own efforts, and not on the failure of others; he will contend that the errors of his fellow-creatures are to him a source of serious concern; he says so,—and he believes that he says the truth; for no man knows the secrets of his own heart; but if it is true, why are the wings of evil fame so swift and so unwearied? Why is it not as difficult to lose, as to gain, the commendations of mankind? Why does it require a whole life to gain a character which can be lost, and unjustly lost, in a single moment of time? It is this, because we are reluctant to exalt and ever willing to pull down; because we love the fault better which gives us an inferior, than

the virtue which elevates a human being above us."—Vol. I. Pp. 198.

While we are sincerely glad, as a kind of set-off against the theological condemnation, to bear testimony to the large portion of spirited and vigorous thought and just morality in these volumes, we are yet compelled to tax them, as literary performances, with capital faults. The first that will strike every reader is, excessive affectation. It appears even in the typographical structure of the page. The writer seems to fancy it a merit, or an exploit, to divide and point his sentences in a different manner from that of any other writer in Europe, and a manner which no other writer in Europe will imitate. He has had a quarrel with the *period*; and seems resolved to drive it out of the republic of letters, after all its faithful and welcome services in putting an end to tedious sentences, sermons, and books. The colon, or any other of the marks, is to occupy its vacated place. There often appears a particular care that the stops shall bear no relation to the pauses of the sense.

We know not what else to impute it to but affectation, that we meet with such grammatical faults, as a scholar, and critic could not have fallen into inadvertently. For example; "many a precept *lays* hid in the soul," &c.; "enthusiasm has *sprang* up among the rich;" "when the sword has drank its *full*;" "it often happens that the repentance, *began* at a moment of sickness, vanishes," &c.; "we are thoroughly aware of having *began*," &c.; "after I had *strove* by these means to teach;" "he *sets* down to the feast of Mammon;" "the spirit of the Gospel is evinced by *rising* up the humble;" "as if the time *was* at last arrived;" "we can rarely or *ever* return;" "there is not a feeling of wretchedness you can strike into his heart, but *what* it is eternally recorded against you;" "the man who can please for the passing hour, is better and greater than *him*, who can," &c.; "dissimilar *from* the fruits of the spirit;" "this discontent *of* present things." We have transcribed these examples literally; and surely such things are among the very poorest expedients, by which an author can lose his trouble in trying to persuade his readers that he is too powerfully borne along by his subject to regard grammatical proprieties, or can seek the repute of gratuitous

singularity. It is perhaps hardly worth while to notice his fancy for always using the article *an* before a word beginning with the aspirate, as, "an human being," "an happy foresight," "an habit," "an higher order," "an half-deception," "an heaven," &c. &c.

But the affectation is not confined to these small particulars; it prevails in a most unconscionable degree through the general tenor of our preacher's language. He never goes on so much as two minutes in that manly simplicity of expression, which is natural to a man strenuously and solely intent on illustrating and enforcing his subject. The cast of his language compels an unwilling suspicion, that the purpose is not so much to enforce the subject, as to parade it; and, in doing so, to play off the greatest possible number of quaint pranks of rhetorical manœuvre. We doubt whether we ever saw, within an equal space, so many fantastic quiddities of diction, such a perverse study to twitch our strong, honest, manful, old language into uncouth postures and vain antics. We know not how so to manage our own phrases, as to give a characteristic description of those which spoil these Sermons; but we shall do right to quote a very small sample of them, and we are not aware that, as thus detached, they will sustain the injustice of being made to look more strange than they do in their own pages. "To him . . . it is worth the pains to cultivate mankind"—"the righteous man cultivates and studies all whom he approaches"—"the submission paid to any human being, by the sacrifice of truth, is not meekness, nor humility, but an abject unresisting mind that barter God and Heaven for a moment of present ease"—"life brings with it many weary, weighing hours"—"a man is not saved by knowledge, and if he is puffed up with it, it is laughter and lightness before God"—"as deep as the roots of the earth"—"we have an irresistible tendency to paint ourselves as conscious of honour, or shame, after the outward and visible man has perished away"—"education . . . gives some deep life-marks, by which a human being may recover himself if he does wander"—"and when we have meditated on these things, and filled our minds full of fear, and fair love, and holy hope," &c.—"repentance fills the soul full of sweet.

holy, everlasting godliness"—"proud integrity"—"human beings who bear to us the seeds of good-will"—"the eye tastes the light"—"the genuine soul of compassion is swift to figure and to conceive; it glides into the body of the suffering wretch; it writhes with his agony; it faints with his hunger; it weeps with his tears; it bleeds with his blood; till, blind with the wise and heavenly delusion, it ministers to its own fancied sorrows, and labours for another self"—"the eternal frailty of sin at length degrades a man in his own eyes,"—"bring it home to the chambers of your hearts"—"this spirit will bear of no backsliding; no wavering"—"it has ever been the memorable privilege of this island, to stand forward as the early and eager champion of all the miseries of man"—"all feel the vanity of human wishes, and human designs, when they behold the arts, the arms, the industry of nations, overwhelmed by an Omnipotent destroyer, and their heritage tost to the children of blood"—"repentance fertilized into Christian righteousness"—"parent, and husband, and child, and friend, may all perish away, and leave us a wreck of time in the feeble solitude of age"—"he whom the dread of universal infamy, the horror of being degraded from his rank in society, the thought of an hereafter will not inspire with the love of truth, who prefers any temporary convenience of a lie to a broad, safe and refulgent veracity, that man is too far sunk in the depths of depravity for any religious instructions he can receive in this place; the canker of disease is gone down to the fountains of his blood, and the days of his life are told"—"thus live the souls of the just in the dungeons of the flesh"—"a mind beautifully inlaid with the thoughts of angels"—"engrave upon his (an infant's) printless heart, the feelings of pain"—"the words . . . are irreligious, blasphemous, and bad"—"his stony rock"—"you are either sacramented for life to the first crude system you have adopted, or, &c."—"it shall be better even for the fool that says in his heart there is no God, than for him who looks up to a heaven that disgraces him, and pins his soul upon a faith which he smothers as a crime"—"the most beautiful feelings of the heart"—"that breath still hangs in his nostrils"—"our Saviour. . . . while he endeavours to throw open every

compassionate heart as an asylum for the afflicted, and to make the good an altar for the miserable, &c."—"repays them (parents) all that fine care which has averted the perils of infant life"—"it is fine to observe, that reason, &c."—"the sounds which are sung out before the throne of God."

If this is really come to be the proper diction, our Taylors and Barrows, our Drydens and Addisons, have had their day: and the gravest subjects are now held forth in a slang, compounded of all the motley whimsicalities which conceited ingenuity can fabricate in imitation of the scriptural, the classical, the poetical, the commercial, the fashionable, and the vulgar dialects, and from its own sheer perversity and extravagance. This fantastic style is probably attributable in part, as we have already hinted, to the preacher's mind being too careless about his subject; in which state its inventive activity is sufficiently exempt from the absorption of feeling to be desirous of amusing itself by flourishing all sorts of vanities along the composition. And it is partly the result of a systematic endeavour to maintain a constant appearance of thinking originally. We have repeatedly observed the fact that there is no expedient by which a writer or speaker may so effectually persuade himself that he always thinks originally as to get a habit of expressing himself strangely. We would therefore entreat our divine to rid himself of this monstrous dialect, if it were only to preserve to himself the power of discriminating the comparative qualities of his own ideas and compositions, and even if his present mode of expression were not so offensive to correct taste. He does think originally sometimes; but what is likely to be the consequence of an author's taking up a notion that he always does so?

It needs not be remarked that, in some of the sentences we have transcribed, the affected cast is fully as much in the form of the conception as in the mode of expression.

Our literary dissatisfaction reaches its greatest height at those parts of these Sermons which are intended to be pathetic and sublime. It is not that the writer does not often make a judicious selection of the topics, scenes, and circumstances adapted to touch the heart; nor that he does not sometimes attain considerable elevation of thought;

but there is an utter want of that element of sentiment, or passion, which is essential to pathetic and sublime eloquence. An energetic, simple feeling must prevail through every sentence, to the exclusion of every appearance of managing ingenuity or ostentation. The effect of such compositions is just the reverse of that produced by those before us, which quell, and prostrate, and freeze our feelings, exactly in proportion to the measure of pathos or grandeur exhibited. We have an unaccountable impression, as if the author would laugh at us if we were affected by the pictures he is displaying. We reproach ourselves for the feeling; but with our best efforts we still fail to divest ourselves of a feeling that the orator, while addressing the passions, is himself in a state of the utmost composure; and our minds perversely, or perhaps complacently, prefer maintaining their tranquillity too, in gentle accordance with his, to the emotions which should seem to be demanded by those splendid or terrible and pitiable objects which he places before us. But still we cannot like ourselves, while the most melancholy visions are opened before us of destroying armies, desolated countries, burning cities, murdered families, without moving us to horror or compassion; while valorous and magnificent sentiments of patriotism excite in us such a very moderate degree of impatience to die for our country; or while the more tender images of maternal and infantine distress, or female penitence, leave us capable of diverting so soon to indifferent objects. Nor can we like the oratory, which, in displaying these objects and scenes, continually reminds us, and keeps us perfectly cool by reminding us of rhetorical artifice and stage effect.

To regain their own good opinion, our minds will have it that almost all the fault is in the exhibitor; and that if he had been any thing more than a mere actor or rhetorician, there would have been no possibility of avoiding to melt or burn while beholding him make such representations. There is hardly one moment of true sympathetic beguilement; when there seems to be the most impassioned vehemence, the very rapture of eloquence, it is all seen through with perfect ease. The following rhapsody on veracity, for instance, seems to dash off much in the style and manner of an impetuous torrent of passion; and really

it indicates much force of conception; but the quaintly expressed conceit of the "heart bursting in twain," the affected cast of several other expressions, and the artificial, hurrying rapidity, all concur—we should not say, to prove the writer,—but certainly to preserve the reader, as free from real passion, as in constructing or perusing one of the diurnal pieces of rhetoric on the wheel of fortune.

"I have hitherto considered the love of truth on the negative side only, as it indicates what we are not to do; but there is an heroic faith, . . . a courageous love of truth, the truth of the Christian warrior,—an unconquerable love of justice, that would burst the heart in twain if it had not vent, which makes women men,—and men saints,*—and saints angels, . . . Often it has published its creed from amidst the flames; . . . often it has reasoned under the axe, and gathered firmness from a mangled body; . . . often it has rebuked the madness of the people; . . . often it has burst into the chambers of princes to tear down the veil of falsehood, and to speak of guilt, of sorrow, and of death. Such was the truth which went down with Shadrach to the fiery furnace, and descended with Daniel to the lion's den. . . . Such was the truth which made the potent Felix tremble at his eloquent captive; such was the truth which roused the timid Peter to preach Christ crucified before the Sanhedrin of the Jews; and such was the truth which enabled that Christ whom he did preach to die the death upon the cross."—Vol. I. p. 45.

Two or three short passages belonging to the pathetic department will show that the orator can select his images with judgment and delineate them with strength; but if any reader finds also the affecting simplicity of real feeling, we must submit to envy his better perceptions. The following is from a Sermon for the Scotch Lying-in Hospital.

"If the image of a parent forsaken at this time of her distress has aught in it which appeals to your compassion; how awful the spectacle of a mother driven by hunger and despair to the destruction of her child. To see a gentle creature hurled from the bosom to which it turns—grasped by the hands that should have toiled for it,—mangled by her who should have washed it with her tears, and warmed it with her breath, and fed it with

* In spite of the eloquent rapidity, there must here have been a pause, and a soft smile, to intimate to the female part of the auditory that this was only rhetoric.

her milk. You may enjoy a spectacle far different from this, you may see the tranquil mother on the bed of charity, and the peaceful child slumbering in her arms; you may see her watching the trembling of every limb, and listening to the tide of the breath, and gazing through the dimness of tears, on the body of her child. The man who robs and murders for his bread would give charity to this woman; good Christians, have mercy upon her, and *death shall not snatch away your children*; they shall live and prosper; mankind will love them! God will defend them!

"I am speaking to those who will understand me when I remind you of the feelings of a poor, industrious man, whose earnings, exhausted in the purchase of food, disable him from making any provision at this season for the comforts of his wife. When you see him toiling from sun to sun, and still unable to rise above the necessities of the present hour, will you not save to such a useful, honest being, the anguish of returning to a sick house; the sight of agonies which he cannot relieve, and of wants to which he cannot administer? give me a little out of your abundance, and I will lift off this weight from his heart; listen to me when I kneel before you for humble, wretched creatures; help me with some Christian offering, and I will give meat to the tender mother, and a pillow for her head, and a garment for the little child, and she shall bless God in the fulness of her heart. I fear I have detained you too long; but the sorrows of many human beings rest upon me, and many mothers are praying that I may bring back bread for their children. *I told them that this ancient Christian people had never yet abandoned the wretched, that they had ever listened to any minister of Christ who spoke for the poor; I bade them be of good comfort, that God would raise them up friends, and when they showed me their children, I vowed for you all, that not one of them should perish for hunger; do not send me back empty-handed to these victims of sorrow; let not the woman and the suckling be driven from their comfortable home; listen to the voice of the woman in travail, and minister to the wailing and spreading of hands; if one social tie binds you to human life; if you can tell how the mother's heart is twined about her child; if you remember how women lighten the sorrows of life; if you are the disciple of the Saviour Jesus to whom they kindly ministered, forsake them not this once, and God shall save you in the hour of death and the day of sharp distress.*"

We have only one more remark on the composition. The thoughts and sentences are not formed into a proper series and sequence. Instead of the sense being carried on in a

train of finished sentences, each advancing it one distinct step straight forwards, it is dispersed out into a multitude of small pieces on either hand. Instead of advancing, if we may so express it, in a strong, narrow column, one thought treading firmly and closely after another, the composition presents a number of thoughts, collateral and related, rather consequentially dependent, hurrying irregularly forwards almost parallel to one another.*

PALEY'S MEMOIRS.

Memoirs of William Paley, D.D. By G. W. MEADLEY. To which is added an Appendix. 8vo. 1809.

WE are a little reluctant to accept this work as giving a true impression of the character of Dr. Paley. And yet the biographer appears an intelligent, well-informed, and candid man; was personally acquainted with the Doctor during the last years of his life; and has evinced a commendable diligence of inquiry respecting its former periods, of which various particulars have been communicated to him by some of Paley's early and surviving friends. There is no doubt of the general accuracy of the book as a memorial of facts; and we have not much right to question whether a just estimate of the character is conveyed by the whole effect of the recitals and observations. Those parts of the sketch which are formed from the author's opinion, seem well warranted by those which consist of narration, and are quite in the same spirit. But, if this be a true delineation, we cannot but regret that truth had not authorized a different one.

It was not, for our complacency, a fortunate circumstance, to have read these Memoirs about the same time that we had occasion to read the lives of some of the most eminent of the puritan divines, such as Baxter, Howe, and Philip Henry. In these men we beheld, beside the talents and learning which in them were but very secondary recom-

* See Foster's Life and Correspondence, Vol. I., p. 339.—Ed.

commendations, the utmost sublimity of devotional sentiment, such a zeal for the promotion of Christianity as absorbed their whole being, a promptitude and a heroic perseverance to make any and every sacrifice to the most refined dictates of conscience, a great indifference to considerations of emolument and fame, a contempt of vain customs and amusements, and therefore, in the combination and result of all these qualities, a character prodigiously elevated above anything that the world in general has ever consented to acknowledge as its standard of morals and religion. We turned from these models of transcendent excellence, to inspect the character of Dr. Paley, as drawn by a very sensible friend and admirer. In high estimation of his talents and writings, we yield but in a very slight degree to this or any other of his eulogists; and in those particular features of his works, which deny us the pleasure of approving and admiring, we are very unwilling to perceive indications of qualities, which a religious observer must be compelled to disapprove in his character. But in viewing the character displayed in the book before us, we find every tendency to that enthusiasm, with which we contemplate the highest order of human excellence, completely arrested. We calculate with pensive wonder the width of moral space through which we find we have been suddenly conveyed, when we contrast the affectionate veneration, and the passionate aspirings to resemblance, which we have just felt in thinking of those men, several of whose names we have mentioned, with the state of our feelings in the company of the subject of these Memoirs. There is presented to us, indeed, a combination of highly respectable qualities; love of truth, independence of character with respect to the rich and great, orderly attention to the concerns and ministrations of the church, impartiality in discharging the duties of a magistrate, kindness in domestic relations, and patience in suffering. Now, with regard to the ordinary tribe of divines, we suppose it would be thought very illiberal to insist, that something more than this is desirable in a man who is appointed an instructor, monitor, and pattern to mankind, in relation to infinitely the most momentous of their concerns: the present times are indulgent in fixing the standard of clerical piety. Passing over the question,—

whether, with the awful importance of religion, and the nature of the consequent responsibility of its teachers, full in our view, we are bound to concur in this law of indulgence,—we may at least confidently assume, that an eminently conspicuous and powerful advocate of Christianity, ought to have been distinguished by a spirit peculiarly sympathetic with that of the Founder, and that of the apostles, martyrs, and confessors of this religion. For surely he that in modern times has a more impressive view than almost all his contemporaries of its evidence and excellence, possesses something strikingly in common with its first promulgators. His more luminous view of the truth and divine excellence of the religion, places him on a ground of nearly equal privilege with that of those persons, who commenced its disciples and advocates actually amidst the prodigies that attended its first introduction. But to have embraced the religion under the immediate impression of those miracles, which gave direct proof from heaven of its being not only true, but, in the divine estimation, of inexpressible importance, and then to have been less than ardently zealous in the exercise and promotion of it, would have been deemed an unpardonable inconsistency. It would have been expected, and even required, of that man, that he should be inspired and actuated by the divine principles thus received into his mind, as much almost as if a spirit had descended from heaven to inhabit his person, and determine the whole system of his sentiments and agency. And, therefore, nearly the same result is justly required from the man in later times, who, being favoured with a superlative clearness of conviction, is placed in nearly as high a rank of privilege as the original converts and advocates.

If this be true, the Memoirs of Dr. Paley cannot be read without considerable regret. Sincerely gratified to observe and applaud his excellent and amiable qualities, we yet in vain endeavour to avoid perceiving a very serious deficiency of what we think the spirit of primitive Christianity. Notwithstanding much moral worth, there is something unsaintly spread over the character. A respectable man of the world seems to meet us, when we wish to see a person that will remind us of the Apostles. It is not to be noted as a fault, that Paley had not the great passions which,

when combined with great talents, can make a character sublime: his constitution denied him that warmth and energy which can throw the mind into fits of enthusiasm, which can make good men captivating, and bad ones dangerously seductive. However favourable this incapability of great emotions might be to purely intellectual operations, its obvious tendency was to withhold the mind from being completely grasped by that religion, of which the efficacy depends so much on the affections; and to deprive the clearest intellectual representations made in its favour, in preaching and writing, of that very powerful principle of efficacy which they derive from the mingling sensibility, which can give a character of sentiment and vitality to every argument, without in the least injuring its logic. The natural incapability of great emotions operates very strongly to prevent the prevalence of the Christian spirit in the man, and in the minister and vindicator of religion, unless an appropriate discipline is adopted to obviate this injurious effect. That discipline would consist, in habituating the mind to dwell much on the most solemn and affecting views of revelation, in employing a considerable portion of time in exercises strictly devotional, in reading those writers who have infused an irresistible pathos into their Christian discussions, and in frequently seeking the society of those who are distinguished by zeal and devotional feelings as well as intelligence. In these Memoirs it is not made to appear that Dr. Paley had recourse to such a moral regimen.

We are not informed of any special anxiety in his early instructors to make the impressions of religion deep in his mind. At college he confessedly associated, during the first years, with some young men of very light character. Among the many friends with whom he was more or less intimate during his subsequent life, there are very few that have ever been distinguished for elevated piety. We are not told that, in the society of accomplished men, whom he must often have found strangers or enemies to Christianity, he was watchful to insinuate its claims. We are not told that, amidst that general repute for deficient piety, and for worldly motives and habits, into which he found the clerical character fallen, he was earnest to display, in the person of

the ablest defender of religion, a striking pattern of that moral separation, that refined sanctity, and that superiority even to all suspicion of acceding and adhering to the ecclesiastical profession on any terms involving the sacrifice of conscientious principles to worldly interests, without which the clerical character never will or can be revered by the people. We lament to feel that we are not contemplating a character, which we dare hold up for such a pattern, in a memoir which represents Dr. Paley's habits as very much assimilated to those of what may be called respectable men of the world; which condescends to tell that he "frequently mixed in card-parties, and was considered a skilful player at whist;" which informs us, that even when approaching near to old age, "he still retained his predilection for theatrical amusements, especially when any eminent performer from the metropolis appeared upon a neighbouring stage," and that "in a provincial theatre he always seated himself as near as possible to the front of the centre box;" none of which circumstances are adapted to allay the disapprobation and disgust with which we see him surrendering his integrity, according to our judgment of the case, in the affair of subscription. Nor does it give us all the pleasing images which poets, and indeed much more sober men, have associated with the character of a Christian pastor, when we see a clergyman, much after the manner of an exciseman, removed from living to living, in a long succession of still advancing emoluments, and without any mention, as far as we remember, that either the minister or the people suffered much from regret in these separations. We are very far from regarding him as a hunter of preferment, or as capable of practising any degree of sycophancy to what are called great men, either in the church or the state. He was most honourably superior to those vile arts of servility and flattery which have so often been rewarded with titles and emoluments; and he signally proved his independence, by publishing, at a time when he must have regarded his advancement in the church as depending, such opinions on religious liberty and the principles of political science, as could not fail to be very offensive to that class of persons, whom the aspirants to preferment find it their interest, and therefore their duty to please. But though his successive

augmentations of emolument, obtained by means of pluralities and of changes of situation, were conferred without being solicited, and conferred on eminent desert, yet the whole course of these successes carries in our view, a strange resemblance to a trading concern. It looks just as if cures of souls were things measured and proportioned out, on an ascending scale of pecuniary value, for the purpose of handsome emolument to men, who have happened to apply talents to the service of the church, which might fairly have been expected to make a fortune if exerted in some other department. The consideration of the spiritual welfare of these successive allotments of souls, and the beneficent effect that would result from that affectionate attachment which might grow between the minister and his people, if he did not officiate among them just as a man who is obliged to stop a while in his journey toward some richer parish, appear really as but very secondary matters.

In reverting to all we have said in dissatisfaction with the religious character of Dr. Paley, it is right to observe that we cannot know precisely how much of the blame is due to his biographer. Certainly, the specific fact of his setting his people the example of pushing into a theatre, which every body that has been there knows to be a school of profaneness and immorality, will alone perfectly warrant a large and sweeping conclusion as to the defectiveness of his religious feelings and habits, and as to the strange laxity of his conception of the proprieties of consistency for a distinguished advocate of the religion of Christ; yet there might, at times, be better aspects of the character, and his posthumous Sermons lead us to believe there certainly were. A biographer who had felt that religion is the most important thing which can prevail or be wanting in any human being, would have been eager to bring these aspects fully into view. But we are not permitted to know whether this writer regards religion, Christianity, or whatever we may call it, as anything more than one of the many uncertain and unimportant subjects of human speculation. He judges it indeed, a very proper *professional* ground of clerical exertion; an ecclesiastic should be clever in his own business; Dr. Paley proved himself eminently so in his "*Evidences of Christianity*;" and, therefore, he *deserved well of the church*

as an institution that has honours and emoluments to confer. This is about the amount of what we are enabled to collect of the present biographer's estimate of religion. And therefore we regard him as totally unqualified to mark the points of religious excellence or defect in any character. If to those who had the privilege of acquaintance and friendship, Dr. Paley did sometimes disclose a considerable degree of devotional feeling, a writer like the present would probably be unwilling to display the philosopher verging toward the "fanatic." Or, if toward the close of his life, he had been heard to express bitter regret, for not having lived more in the spirit of that religion which he had defended (not that we ever heard he did this), our author would have carefully concealed a weakness so symptomatic of decaying understanding.

The religious character, therefore, of this eminent man, remaining a subject for the discernment and justice of some other biographer, we recommend the volume before us, as a sensible, well-written account of the chief occurrences in his life, and of the prominent distinctions of his talents and social habits. It has the particular value of giving a larger portion of characteristic anecdotes, than is usually afforded in the memoirs of a scholar and author. These anecdotes show a striking identity of character in all the stages of Paley's life. In the school-boy and in the archdeacon we have the same gay humour, logical shrewdness, attention to matters of fact, preference of practical to theoretical principles, moderate but constant regard to worldly interest, and perfect exemption from the perturbations of romantic sentiment. His father early entertained a high estimate of his faculties, and was much nearer the truth in his predictions than usually happens in matters of parental prophecy. "My son is now gone to college,—he'll turn out a great man—very great indeed,—I'm certain of it: for he has by far the clearest head I ever met with in my life." (P. 7.) At school he was—

"more attentive to things than words, and ardent in the pursuit of knowledge of every kind. He was curious in making inquiries about mechanism, whenever he had an opportunity of conversing with any workmen, or others capable of affording him satisfactory information. In his *mind* he was uncommonly

active ; in his *body* quite the reverse. He was a bad horseman, and incapable of those exertions which required adroitness in the use of the hands or feet. He consequently never engaged in the ordinary sports of school-boys ; but he was fond of angling—an amusement in which he did not then excel, though his attachment to it seems to have continued through life. He was much esteemed by his school-fellows, as possessing many good qualities, and being at all times a pleasant and lively companion. He frequently amused the young circle by the successful mimicking of a mountebank quack-doctor, in vending his powders. Having one year attended the assizes at Lancaster, he was so much taken with the proceedings of the criminal court, that on his return to school, he used to preside there as a judge, and to have the other boys brought up before him as prisoners for trial. This circumstance, trifling as it may appear to the superficial observer, is not unimportant, as it marks his earliest attention to the practice of courts of justice, and to criminal law.”—P. 3.

His mind seems to have possessed a natural conformity to those rigid laws of thought, to which the greatest number of thinking men can but imperfectly subject themselves by the severest discipline ; and we predict the envy of nineteen students in twenty, and confess our own, in reading part of the following paragraph :—

“ Being thus left to himself (at college) he applied, however, most assiduously to those studies required by the university ; in the pursuit of which he had frequent opportunity to show the concentration of mind which he possessed in an extraordinary degree. His room (for he seldom locked his door by night or day) used to be the common rendezvous of the idle young men of his college ; yet, notwithstanding all their noise and nonsense, he might be often seen in one corner, as composed and attentive to what he was reading as if he had been alone. But as, besides the interruption which such loungers must at times have given him, he was remarkable for indulging himself in bed till a very late hour in the morning, and for being much in company after dinner, at tea, and at a coffee-house at nine o'clock in the evening, it is probable that he was more indebted to observation and reflection than to books for the general improvement of his mind.”—P. 2.

We should not be quite so much pleased as the biographer seems to be, to acknowledge that perhaps we owe Dr. Paley's great works to a particular incident that decided him to a

more studious course; though we would infinitely rather be indebted for them to that, or even any meaner cause, than not possess them at all.

"In the year 1795, during one of his visits to Cambridge, Dr. Paley, in the course of a conversation on the subject, gave the following account of the early part of his academical life; and it is here given on the authority, and in the very words, of a gentleman who was present at the time, as a striking instance of the peculiar frankness with which he was in the habit of relating the adventures of his youth.

"I spent the first two years of my undergraduateship happily, but unprofitably. I was constantly in society where we were not immoral, but idle and rather expensive. At the commencement of my third year, however, after having left the usual party at rather a late hour in the evening, I was awakened at five in the morning by one of my companions, who stood at my bedside and said—'Paley, I have been thinking what a d—'d fool you are. I could do nothing, probably, were I to try, and can afford the life I lead: you could do everything, and cannot afford it. I have had no sleep during the whole night on account of these reflections, and I am now come solemnly to inform you, that if you persist in your indolence, I must renounce your society.

"'I was so struck,' Dr. Paley continued, 'with the visit and visitor, that I lay in bed great part of the day, and formed my plan. I ordered my bed-maker to prepare my fire every evening, in order that it might be lighted by myself. I rose at five, read during the whole of the day, and just before the closing of gates (nine o'clock) I went to a neighbouring coffee-house, where I constantly regaled upon a mutton chop and a dose of milk-punch. And thus, on taking my bachelor's degree, I became senior wrangler.'

"Thus fortunately was Dr. Paley roused to a full exertion of his faculties before his habits were completely formed; and to this singular adventure may, perhaps, be attributed, not only his successful labours, as a college tutor, but the invaluable productions of his pen."—P. 193.

A very entertaining account is given of his college disputations; of his becoming an assistant in an academy at Greenwich; of his gaining an university prize by the best dissertation on the comparative merits of the Stoic and Epicurean philosophy, in which he was the advocate of the latter; of his entering on the clerical office, and of his tutorship, of several years' duration, in his college, in which he was asso-

ciated with Mr. Law, son of the Bishop of Carlisle, with whom, and with Dr. Jebb, and other distinguished persons, he maintained a lasting friendship. There is an interesting description of his manner of lecturing, on metaphysics, morals, the Greek Testament, and divinity. We sincerely join in the writer's regret, that some of these lectures, especially the illustrations of Locke, Clarke, and Butler, and of the New Testament, had not been preserved. They were all given without any set formality or previous arrangement of words; he adopted much of a conversational manner, asked questions, and permitted and induced, by his shrewdness and humour, occasional short intervals of hilarity, and employed, with the utmost success, every expedient for precluding the dulness and inattention usually incident to such exercises. We must transcribe the conclusion of the account of the lectures on the Greek Testament.

"But he carefully avoided all sectarian disputes, taking for his model, *Locke on the Reasonableness of Christianity*, and *On the Epistles*, works which he frequently recommended. The Thirty-nine Articles of Religion he treated as mere articles of peace, the whole of which it was impossible the framers could expect any one person to believe, as upon dissection they would be found to contain about two hundred and forty distinct and independent propositions, many of them inconsistent with each other. They must, therefore, he said, be considered as propositions, which, for the sake of keeping peace among the different sects of reformers, who originally united in composing the Church of England, it was agreed should not be impugned or preached against. The chief points insisted on by Mr. Paley to his pupils were, that they should listen to God, and not to man; that they should exert their faculties in understanding the language of holy men of old; that they should free themselves, as much as possible, from all prejudices of birth, education, and country; and that they should not call any one their master in religion but Jesus Christ."

The last sentence the author quotes (with a reference) from the *Universal Magazine* for 1805. The opinion advanced in the above extract was afterwards matured into a short and well-known chapter on Subscription, in the *Moral and Political Philosophy*, where it is stated that—

"they who contend, that nothing less can justify subscription

to the Thirty-nine Articles, than the actual belief of each and every separate proposition contained in them, must suppose, that the legislature expected the consent of ten thousand men, and that in perpetual succession—not to one controverted proposition, but to many hundreds. It is difficult to conceive how this could be expected by any who observed the incurable diversity of human opinion upon all subjects short of demonstration.”—Vol. I. p. 217.

It is not a little mortifying to see a man so superlatively intelligent, and in many points so honest, as Paley, and to see so vast a number of other men who declare themselves moved by the Holy Ghost, descending to this renunciation of the simplicity of reason and conscience. Dr. Paley knew, and we are confident that every individual, who after serious consideration subscribes the Articles, knows, that the framers and imposers of them *did* intend and require that every proposition they contain should be believed by the persons subscribing them. He knew, and they all know, that in provident contemplation of the quibbles, reservations, and evasions to which men might be dishonest enough to have recourse, in order to obtain the benefits of the Establishment without satisfying the intentions of its founders, the authoritative instruments of sanction and prescription which accompany these articles are expressed with the minute and pleonastic phraseology of legal precaution. They know that the assent is required precisely to “all and every of them;” and that in the “plain and full meaning thereof,” and “in the literal and grammatical sense,” “the least difference from the said articles” being strictly “prohibited.” They know that the terms of the imposition are as precise, and comprehensive, and absolute, as language can make them; insomuch that if a series of articles, in the nature of a political or commercial arrangement, or any other secular institution, were accompanied by the definitive sanction of the institutors in forms and terms of authorization so carefully select, express, and comprehensive, the man who should pretend to raise a question, whether the institutors really meant “all and every” of those articles to be strictly authoritative on every person entering on the benefit of that institution, would instantly come to be regarded as unfit for civilized society. It is something much worse than trifling

to allege, that the imposers *could* not intend to exact a full assent *because* the articles contain several hundred propositions, and some of them contradictory to others. That errors, and even contradictions may, according to the opinion of the examiner, be detected in a creed drawn up by fallible men, is no reason for surmising that they did not themselves solemnly believe it in every part. And as to the argument—that to expect ten thousand men, and that in perpetual succession, to believe all these propositions, is so gross an absurdity, that it is impossible to suppose the framers and imposers of the articles could really expect such a thing,—we may observe, that it would indicate an extremely slender knowledge of ecclesiastical history, to question whether the heads of churches and states have ever been capable of assuming it to be a possible thing to effect a uniformity of faith, and a reasonable thing to expect and command it. But there is no occasion for argument; the certain matter of fact is, that the framers and imposers of the Thirty-nine Articles *did* require this complete assent. Let the man, therefore, who is resolved to maintain freedom of opinion, honestly take the ecclesiastical institution as what it is, and he may fairly make, if he pleases, as many objections as it has articles, while he preserves his consistency and integrity by declining to place himself within its obligations. But it is meanly disingenuous, nor can we comprehend how it can be otherwise than utterly immoral, for this man, in order to enable himself to pursue his own interests by entering the church, to pretend that its grand law of doctrine *must not and cannot mean that, which it has notoriously taken all possible care to express that it absolutely does mean, and absolutely does enjoin*. By extending this privilege of conscience a few degrees further, a Mahometan or Pagan may subscribe the articles and enter the church, if he has any object to gain by it. He may say, “Here is a large formulary of opinions, comprising several hundred propositions, not all even consistent with one another. Now it had been most absurd for the imposers to require that every subscriber should believe all these; it is absurd therefore to suppose they did require it. And since this formula, which is the only authoritative prescription by which I can learn what

I am required to believe, gives me no certain information on the subject, I may fairly regard the whole affair as a matter of discretion."

Dr. Paley represents, that the *animus imponentis* must be taken as the rule for the degree of assent required in subscribing the articles. Let us then, in imagination, go back for a moment to the time when the articles were solemnly appointed to be perpetually imposed; and let us suppose a man like Dr. Paley to have presented himself before the bishops who framed, and the legislature which imposed them, to inquire concerning the *animus*, the real, plain meaning and intention, with which these articles were composed and enforced. Would not the reply have been most indignant, or most contemptuous? "You ask the intention; why, you can read the articles, can you not? Our intention is of course conveyed in what we have solemnly and deliberately set forth. And we intend *all* that is set forth; for would it become us, and on such an occasion, to employ ourselves in the construction of needless and nugatory propositions? And we conceive we have enounced our propositions with sufficient clearness; it is not possible you are come here to insult us with an insinuation, that the result of our grave, deliberate, and combined labours, is an assemblage of jargon which needs an explanatory declaration to tell what we mean by it all. As to what you surmise about our object being to keep Papists, Anabaptists, and Puritans out of the church, it would be no concern of yours, if that *were* our principal object; your business is with the articles as we have judged it proper to set them forth; but in fact, the exclusion of these sects is only one among the several good ends to be answered; we mean to secure the purity of our church by excluding *all* that the full and plain meaning of our articles will exclude. It is, therefore, your concern, as you will answer it at your peril, to maintain all and every of them inviolably, in their true and literal meaning."

As to what Dr. Paley is stated to have maintained in his Lectures, that "the articles must be considered as propositions which, for the sake of keeping peace among the different sects of Reformers, who originally united in composing the Church of England, it was agreed should not be impugned or preached against," it is sufficient to observe,

that these propositions are, by his own account, so very numerous, that it is quite impossible for any man to preach on religion at all, without either impugning or directly adopting a very great number of them. They are so minute and comprehensive, that they leave but a very small space for the practice of that reserve and avoidance implied in this "keeping peace," if the phrase has any meaning.

In short, the national church either has a defined doctrinal basis, or it has not. If it has not, what a mockery has been practising in its name on the nation and on Christendom for several centuries, in representing it as, next the Scriptures, the most faithful depository, and the grandest luminary of the Christian religion; while the truth has been, as we are now called upon by some of its ablest members to understand, that it has really, during all this time, had no standard of doctrine at all,—the instrument, purporting to be such, having been in fact nothing more than a petty contrivance to keep out two or three disagreeable sects. If the church has a defined doctrinal basis, that basis can be no other than the Thirty-nine Articles. And these articles, taken in their literal meaning, are *essential* to the constitution of the church; else, they are still nothing at all; they impose no obligation, and can preserve or preclude no modes of opinion whatever. And their being thus essential to the church, means that they are essential to be, all and every of them, faithfully believed and taught by all its ministers. Therefore, finally, every man who says he cannot subscribe, or has not subscribed, the articles, in this upright manner, says, in other words, that he has no business in the church. It is not the question what the articles *ought* to have been; he must take them as they are; and by the same rule that he must take any one of them he must take them all, as they all stand exactly on the same authority. Till they are modified or changed by that authority which was competent to constitute, and is competent to alter, the ecclesiastical institution, any clergyman who remains in the church disbelieving any one proposition in its articles, violates the sanctity and integrity of the church, and, as far as we are able to comprehend, must violate his own conscience. He cannot but know, that on the same principle on which he presumes to invalidate one

article, other men may invalidate any or all of the remainder, and thus the church may become a perfect anarchy, a theatre of confusion and all manner of heresies. According to this view of the subject, Dr. Paley had no right to enter the church, or remain in it; and by doing so, he dishonoured his principles. He is thus placed in a striking and unfortunate contrast with such men as Jebb and Lindsey, whose consciences were of too high a quality to permit such an unsound and treacherous connexion with the Established Church; and in a parallel, not less striking and unfortunate, with such a man as *Stone*!

This ungracious subject has unexpectedly detained us so long, that no room is left for other observations which had occurred to us in reading these Memoirs. By means of his situations in the church, and of his writings, Dr. Paley appears to have made a good fortune. His biographer loudly complains, notwithstanding, of the scanty patronage and preferment in which he was fated to acquiesce; and in a strain that really sounds very much like saying, that these things were the appropriate and grand reward for which he was to prosecute all his labours. We have no doubt, however, that Dr. Paley had motives of a higher order than his friend seems capable of appreciating; while, with all our perception of his very serious defects, we rejoice in the benefit that present and future ages will derive from those writings in which he has so powerfully defended religion.

ROSE ON FOX'S HISTORY.

Observations on the Historical Work of the Right Honourable Charles James Fox. By the Right Honourable GEORGE ROSE. *With the Narrative of the Events which occurred in the Enterprise of Earl of Argyll, in 1685.* By SIR PATRICK HUME. 4to. 1809.

It is presumed that a certain portion of mankind hate the intellectual despotism which is felt to be maintained by pre-eminent talents, in however liberal a spirit they are exerted; and are therefore extremely gratified to see men of ordinary

abilities gain an advantage, in any instance, through industry or good luck, over men of the highest genius. To the reading part of this class of persons the present volume will be peculiarly acceptable; and on the other hand, to those who are tempted absolutely to worship great talents, it will not be a little mortifying, though salutary as a check on idolatry, to see such a man as Mr. Fox write a book to be refuted by such a man as Mr. Rose. The case is made still worse, when we recollect that the illustrious historian was several years in preparing his work; and find the present writer modestly pleading, in extenuation of any imperfections in his own performance, that he was obliged to compose it "in little more than the same number of weeks," and that too "in the midst of almost unremitting attention to official duties, which take equally from the disembarassment of the mind as from the leisure of time." In whatever degree this examiner appears to be successful in the detection of errors in the historian, we are so much more confirmed in the opinion (to which we could not help inclining ever since first hearing of Mr. Fox's undertaking), that he might have found far better employment for his incomparable talents. It was obvious, and the present publication makes it still more obvious, what loads of old records and tedious worm-eaten documents it would be necessary to ransack, in order to do complete historical justice to the period in question; an employment inexpressibly dull, consumptive of time, repressive of eloquence, and productive of diminutive results, compared with the quantity of labour. That a person like the writer before us should be so occupied, under some adequate security for his impartiality in exhibiting those results, we think is excellent; and we are most sincerely sorry that such a troublesome pressure of "official duties," (including of course the really very onerous toil of counting all their emoluments) should have diverted so much of his industry from so proper a department. But to occupy a mind like that of Fox, in such a business, would be, as Burke said, "to yoke a courser of the sun to a mud-cart."

The various persons who may, in the present time, be placed ¹⁰⁰ each to become the historian of some long period, church, ¹⁰⁰ nation, will not derive much animation or violate his ¹⁰⁰ their hopes, from seeing how many questions the same p.

of fact, within the narrow compass of a short modern period of own history, may be kept in a state of interminable controversy; and that even the extensive and sagacious inquiry of Mr Fox might fail to collect all the information necessary for such a section of history. It will not be a very gratifying consideration, that half a moderately long life will hardly suffice for the mere purpose of research, unless they they should prudently choose a period or country concerning which there are very few documents,—that the correct and decisive evidence, on this and the other doubtful point, perhaps lies in some chest of mouldy papers, which they do not even know to exist,—and that after they shall have bequeathed a splendid performance to posterity, and perhaps made their exit in the proud confidence of immortal fame, somebody that shall be at once inquisitive and dull enough to rummage the said chest, may come and cut up some of their most refined theories, sage reflections, or eloquent declamations, by producing a quotation from some manuscript letter, or memoir, just barely legible, of Lord A., or Sir William B., the mirrors, in their day, of ministerial or diplomatic wisdom, virtue, and intrigue.

When Fox's interesting posthumous fragment, accompanied by Lord Holland's observations on the anxious and elaborate accuracy of the historian, came into the hands of Mr. Rose, it was very natural that the whole resources of his ample knowledge of our political history should be put in requisition; and that certain feelings respecting Fox and the political principles of which he was the champion, might prompt a renewed and more minute scrutiny into some particular points of the history. Fox's work, besides, in the part which narrates the expedition of Argyle, contains some accusations of Sir Patrick Hume, who was the ancestor of a late Lord Marchmont, who was the particular friend of Mr. Rose, and "deposited with him, as a sacred trust, all the MSS. of his family, with an injunction to make use of them, if Mr. Rose should ever find it necessary." Of course it has become absolutely necessary, in consequence of Mr. Fox's imputations, to publish some of these papers, especially Sir Patrick's narrative of the expedition. It was impossible that any honest man in England should enjoy peace of mind, till he should have it on Sir Patrick's own

word that he was *not* a factious officer in that expedition, and did *not* contribute to its unfortunate termination. Nor was it possible to suppose that the events which were to take place in Spain at the time dated at the end of the present work, or the events taking place on the banks of the Danube about the time of its publication, might occupy the public mind too strongly for it to become deeply interested in hearing of the intimate friendship which subsisted between Lord Marchmont and Mr. George Rose. Everything, therefore, relating to Sir Patrick Hume and his descendants, and their friendships, is with the utmost propriety given to the world in this costly quarto. It is one of the calamities of this nation that there cannot be found and published ample documents relating to every man whose name has been mentioned, and whose conduct has been incorrectly or questionably stated, throughout the whole history of all our civil wars. This would contribute to allay the apprehensions with which we are sometimes visited, lest the good people of England should be impelled, for the pure sake of a little stimulus to the faculties, into another civil war, by the intolerable *tedium vitæ*, occasioned by their having absolutely nothing to read and nothing to do.

With respect to the observations on the other parts of Fox's work, we ought to recall any surmise we have inadvertently hinted, as to motives which might be supposed to have induced a staunch political opponent to ransack all manner of records, printed and unprinted, for means of invalidating the statements or reasonings of the historian. It is only, however, in the case of an eminently and seriously disinterested person, like the present writer, that we can feel ourselves bound to give entire credit. He represents himself as actuated in such an undertaking by a pure love of truth and the public good. Conformably with so worthy a motive for entering on a work, it would seem that, in this one rare instance, the execution of it has been regulated by a still more conscientiously rigid impartiality, than if the performance advertised on had *not* been that of an opponent. For, adverting to the unfavourable impression with which the public may receive such a work, from a "man who had been very long honoured with the confidence,

and enjoyed the *affectionate* friendship of Mr. Fox's political opposer," he is pleased to add, "I am certain that from this feeling I have been more scrupulous both of my authorities and of my own opinions, than I might have been in commenting on the work of any other author." This public spirit in the motives, and this annihilation of all party prejudices in the execution, were peculiarly necessary, and are highly acceptable, in a work, which, though professing the utmost admiration of Mr. Fox, and acquitting him of all wilful misrepresentation, rests its chief claim to attention on its engagement to prove, that he habitually contemplated the characters and events of our history through the perverting medium of his favourite political principles.

After all this disturbance given to so many dusty repositories of national and personal records, we will acknowledge our attention and solitudes are too much engrossed by more recent events, and by prospects at present opening, to comprehend how the people of these times should feel any great concern about the principal matters of fact or opinion which this writer contests with the historian. While standing amidst the ruins of Europe,—and while witnessing the rapid dilapidation of that famed constitution, the supposed final consolidation of which has usually been accounted the greatest work of that age, to a part of which the performances of Mr. Fox and this author relate,—we really think that now no questions can well be of more trifling consequence, than whether the execution of Strafford or Charles I. was the more illegal,—whether General Monk was the very basest man in the army, or only about as bad as his neighbours,—whether the money which Charles II. and James received from the French king was for the purpose of corrupting the parliament, or of enabling them to do without it,—and whether the establishment of despotism or of Popery was uppermost in James's designs.

There is some matter both of information and amusement, and much good humour, in Mr. Rose's long and desultory introduction. But what delights us above everything, is some exquisite moral reflection. After exposing the emulation in baseness of the leaders of the Whigs and Tories in the reign of Queen Anne, our veteran patriot utters the following observation: "In truth, the conduct of many of

the leaders of both parties affords a disgusting picture of what men may be induced to do by a love of power and of situation." We cannot express how much we were gratified by this appropriate and Catoic reflection from Mr. George Rose; and by the consideration that, notwithstanding the corruption of these times, there are still some venerable statesmen, whose independence in the senate, and whose self-denial with regard to public emolument, give them an eminent right thus to condemn their corrupt predecessors. The popular cry of the present times has made it a duty, we think, to transcribe for our readers a valuable piece of moral philosophy, by which we have been much edified ourselves.

"Whether in another situation he (Mr. Fox) might have acted according to the demonstration of his principles in his book, cannot perhaps with certainty be asserted; the difference in situation in the individual gives rise to different views from different opportunities of information, without supposing any inconsistency in the change. Every man conversant in matters of state, will be cautious of imputing a fluctuation of mind, or dereliction of principle, to the conduct of a minister, because it is different from that which in opposition he supposed the best, or argued as the most expedient."—P. xxxiv.

We should be ashamed to think any reader could fail to be convinced, by these observations, that an enlightened and upright man,—who in the month of December judges it a most flagrant treason against a free constitution, or rather an abnegation of its existence, that a regular traffic of sale and exchange should be carried on in seats of parliament, and that to an extent, which combined with corrupt influence, entirely determines the character and measures of the assembly,—may receive, during the ensuing January, on being suddenly appointed a minister, such new lights on the subject, as to be rationally and honestly persuaded, that this same traffic is perfectly consistent with integrity, and is a pure administration of a constitution which, if all that great authorities have said and written about it be not a farce, requires every man in the House of Commons be freely chosen by the people. We have alluded to this particular point of political conversion, because the passage we

have quoted stands in connexion with a complacent and rather proud reference to Mr. Pitt and his principles.

The Observations are distributed in five sections; we will enumerate the principal points argued in them as briefly as possible, and without the smallest attempt to follow the author into any part of the historical research. In the first section he animadverts on Fox's proposition, that the execution of Charles was a less violent measure than that of Lord Strafford; and maintains a contrary opinion, on the ground that the one was only "an abuse or breach of a constitutional law," whereas the other was a "total departure from, or overturning of, the constitution itself." Without pretending to hold any settled opinion on the degree of justice or iniquity in the judicial proceedings against Charles, and their fatal conclusion, we think nothing can be more idle than thus to pretend to bring, as a bar to those proceedings, that very constitution which the monarch had done everything in his power, by fraud and by force, to abrogate, so as at length to have driven the nation to take up arms in order either to recover that constitution, or to obtain the power of framing and establishing some other that should better secure their rights. Our author is more successful against that part of Mr. Fox's observations, which alleges the publicity and solemnity of the proceedings against the king, as an extenuation of their injustice. If the condemnation of the king was unjust in abstract morality,—that is, if he had not done anything in itself deserving the punishment of death, in what mode or by what tribunal soever awarded,—it could then be no palliation of the injustice toward him, that his destruction was effected through a public judicial process rather than a plot of private assassination. Or if, on the other hand, the state of the case was, that, though the king did on the ground of abstract justice deserve the punishment of death, yet the *relative* justice of that punishment (that is, the justice on the part of the agents of it), depended on the political character and qualification of the authority that was to pronounce the doom, and if no authority less than a real national tribunal was duly qualified,—then no public formality and solemnity could extenuate the injustice of a court, which pronounced this doom without being thus qualified. That the high court, before which Charles was arraigned, was not really a national tribunal, is asserted by

Mr. Fox, where he says, that those judges, though some of them were great and respectable men, were collectively to be considered as in this instance the ministers of the usurper. But Mr. Rose's reasonings are not perplexed with much of this casuistry. He rests his condemnation of the proceedings against the king, neither on the king's innocence, nor on the circumstance that the court which tried him was to be regarded as rather an instrument of Cromwell, than an assembly truly representing the nation in this instance, and acting as the organ of its authority and will. He describes some mysterious *jus divinum* in the ghost of the departed constitution; that constitution, which, if it had not been previously destroyed by the king, must necessarily have perished between the meeting points of the royal and popular arms. It was because this deceased constitution had not furnished forms and precedents for the arraignment of kings, that the appointed court had no authority, to proceed against the fallen despot, who had strenuously endeavoured the annihilation of liberty.

The correctness of Fox's estimate of General Monk is next discussed, and we have a large quantity of negative testimony and pleading in his defence. It would seem that his advocate regards him as having failed but by a trifle of being

"That faultless monster which the world ne'er saw ;"

but he adopts a language strangely parsimonious of eulogy, when it is considered that the subject of it was the betrayer and seller of his country. "The character of Monk," he says, "does not appear to be so perfect as to justify unqualified praise being bestowed upon his memory ; but," &c. Now it is certainly possible to conceive crimes which Monk did not commit ; he probably did not stab his father, shoot his mother, or poison his wife. And Mr. Rose has taken immense pains to invalidate the assertion, repeated by Mr. Fox from Burnet, that Monk, "in the trial of the Marquis of Argyle, produced letters of friendship and confidence to take away the life of a nobleman, the zeal and cordiality of whose co-operation with him, proved by such documents, was the chief ground of his execution." So far as the silence of a great number of records and other contemporary writings relating or alluding to that trial, can

disprove the charge, our author has shown it to be disproved; and he has certainly made out some strong cases against Burnet's general accuracy as a historian. Admit then that Monk did *not* destroy his father, mother, wife, or friend, and that it is possible to reckon up some twenty other crimes he did *not* commit; but he laid his country defenceless at the feet of one of the most notoriously depraved creatures that ever trampled on it or any other; and this we must continue to think quite enough to keep him in his conspicuous place on the list of infamy,—not with Mr. Rose's consent, however, for there is not wanting in these pages a round quantity of arguments in justification of his preventing any conditions, in precaution against despotism, being imposed on the monarch at his restoration. Of these arguments, the following is the most ingenious: "The restoration of the monarchy of England, might, in his opinion, have implied all the limitations of its ancient constitution."

In correction of Fox's observation, that the reign of Charles II. was the most distinguished era of good laws, though of bad government, and of the opinion adopted from Blackstone, that the year 1679 may be fixed on as the period at which our constitution had arrived at its greatest theoretical perfection, our author has exhibited great knowledge in showing that, of the alleged good laws, some were in effect bad, and others not first enacted in his reign; and that, of the bad ones mentioned to have been abrogated, some were no more than a dead letter, and others were commuted for what was only not quite so oppressive. He has shown that some of the laws most important to liberty were passed at a later period, and that the reign of William ought rather to be regarded as the consummation of the laws and constitution.

There are but few points contested with Mr. Fox in the second section, which chiefly relates to that infamous clandestine commerce in which Charles II. and some of his courtiers sacrificed the interests of England and its allies to Louis XIV., for sums of money to support their profligacy. It is shown that Fox is mistaken in supposing that Charles carefully concealed his base connexion with France from his ministers, and in believing Lord Clarendon quite innocent of any concern in it. It is proved from Clarendon's own

state papers, that, soon after the restoration, this nobleman, whose integrity has been so often vaunted, degraded himself so far as to be the confidential manager of this vile connexion. It was a worthy employment for a man who, in negotiating that restoration could act in conjunction with such a person as Monk; and deprecate any conditions in the nature of precaution against the probable wickedness and despotism of a prince whom he knew from his own painful experience to be one of the most worthless profligates on earth.—A curious article in this section is the abstract of a secret treaty entered into by Louis and Charles in 1670, by one stipulation of which Charles engages to make a public declaration of his adherence to the Church of Rome, and Louis promises to supply him with money and troops in the event of this measure exciting any dangerous disturbance in the nation. In reprobating the king's money transactions with France, our author gets quite into the strain of a virtuous patriot.

The third section is a long, laborious, and able discussion of the question, whether the establishment of Popery or of despotism was the leading purpose of the designs and measures of James II. Mr. Fox asserted and argued the latter; a vast accumulation of strong testimony is here brought to prove the former. To collect the evidence, our author reviews James's proceedings in each of the three kingdoms, adduces a multitude of instances of the eagerness and pertinacity of his intentions in favour of the Catholics, in some of which instances he put his throne in hazard, and confirms his inference by various strong passages in the correspondence of Louis and Barillon. He also remarks, what Mr. Fox has in one place nearly admitted, that James had no need of schemes and expedients for the establishment of his despotism, for that in this point he met with no opposition; the rigours practised in England, and the infernal massacre and laws of massacre in Scotland (the atrocity of which Mr. Rose says Fox has "under-stated"), having caused no material interruption or disturbance on the loyal infatuation and base servility of his subjects.

Fox's opinion was, that the money supplied by France to Charles and James was for the purpose of enabling them to govern without parliaments. The fourth section of these

Observations is occupied in showing this to be a mistake, and explaining to what use the money was meant to be applied, and actually was applied. A short extract or two will give the result of the disquisition.

"There are unquestionably abundant proofs of Charles agreeing either to put an end to the sitting of Parliament; to avoid summoning them; or to obtain support in them for French objects, under engagements with Louis, from time to time, as he wished to obtain money from him: but there is not the least probability that either one or the other entertained an opinion that the meeting of Parliament could be entirely dispensed with. The extract of a letter from Louis to Barillon; last referred to, on the subject of the Catholic religion, affords a tolerably clear illustration that Louis had no such intention. The engagements appear to have been entered into by Charles, that he might have occasional supplies of money, that were not to be accounted for in any way; and by Louis, that he might derive all the assistance that could be useful to him, from Charles or his brother, for the attainment of his objects, without the latter being restrained by their Parliaments: and we have seen that, in one instance, Charles, in the end of his reign, was enabled to hold out for nearly four years."—P. 128.

"From the light thrown upon it by this correspondence (that of the French ambassadors with their king) and adverting to the amount of the supplies granted by the British Parliament, the most probable conjecture by far seems to be, that the aids solicited by Charles and his brother, and given by Louis, were with the intention of keeping Parliaments in check, rather than for the purpose of enabling the English monarchs, as Mr. Fox supposed, to govern without them. Louis certainly obtained objects of great importance to himself by his bounty: The war between England and Holland; the breach of the treaty between England and Spain, by which Louis got the remainder of the Spanish Netherlands; and the alienation of James from the Prince of Orange, who was the greatest obstacle to the ambitious views of Louis, were among the fruits of the corrupt transactions."—P. 139.

The conclusion of the section is particularly interesting, as relating to the implication of even Russell and Sydney in the charge of maintaining a secret, and in the case of Sydney, a pecuniary commerce, with the court of France. Barillon stated to his master "that he had given two bribes of £500 each to Sydney; and that with Lord Russell he had been in

a clandestine intercourse." Mr. Fox having expressed himself in the strongest possible terms as to the value of Barillon's letters, as evidence of the transactions of those times, Mr. Rose could not fail to hit on the wicked remark, that if the Frenchman's evidence is to be taken as valid against the king, it ought to be taken as valid also against the patriots. But he is anxious to exculpate these great and excellent men, and insists that, even if we should admit the veracity of Barillon, it is due to the very high characters of these two men to believe that they could not, in this intercourse, have any object dishonourable to themselves, or injurious to the nation. But he next suggests considerations, which make it, he thinks, not unreasonable to doubt the truth of Barillon's statement.

"In judging on a point of high importance to his (Sydney's) reputation, it will not, we hope, be thought illiberal, or bearing too hard on the memory of a foreigner of considerable note, if we have in our contemplation, on one hand, the high character of our countryman for inflexible integrity, and the improbability of his doing anything unworthy of that for two sums comparatively so paltry; and, on the other hand, that Barillon was entrusted by his sovereign with very large sums of money; the distribution of which he was of course to give some account of, but for which no vouchers could be required of him: and if it shall be thought allowable to entertain a doubt of the accuracy of the accounts of the ambassador, we may then venture to suggest that he had a two-fold inducement to place those sums to the name of Mr. Sydney, as furnishing a discharge for the amount stated to be given, and affording means of obtaining credit with his employer, for having been able to prevail with such a man to receive foreign money for any purpose."—P. 152.

To countenance this surmise, our author cites several passages from Madame de Sévigné's Letters, intimating that Barillon was becoming rich by means of his residence in England. We presume every reader, who blends patriotism with his admiration of eminent virtue, will gladly entertain Mr. Rose's explanation.

The fifth section expatiates, to a great extent, on the character of Sir Patrick Hume, the expedition and character of the Earl of Argyle, and the conduct and fate of the Duke of Monmouth; intermixing a great many relative and incidental matters of history and opinion, and including a most

profitable book-making quantity of quotation from M. d'Avaux. As to Sir Patrick Hume, there can be little doubt that he was a man of ability and virtue, and a zealous friend of liberty. But this is not enough for Mr. Rose; who cannot allow it possible that the ancestor, of his intimate friend Lord Marchmont, could ever have been betrayed, amidst the most perplexing and harassing circumstances, into the slightest error either of judgment or temper. Sir Patrick Hume, therefore, is justified and applauded in every point, and in every point at the expense of Argyle—a fine specimen of impartiality and good sense in an author who takes every occasion of lecturing the departed historian on that bias of his judgment, which, as this commentator says, perverted his estimates of character. We admire too, the judicial equity or sagacity of admitting Sir Patrick's own statement, as conclusive evidence of this invariable wisdom and rectitude; just as if it were impossible that Argyle could have drawn up an account, which should, with apparent probability, have made all the blame rest on Sir Patrick and his adherents.

Mr. Fox happened to suggest, and in a very few sentences closed, a parallel between Argyle and Montrose. This was like abandoning, and too soon closing up a mine, in which another adventurer is sure there must be a great deal of remaining treasure. Our author has opened it again, and dug out, and brought to light, for the pure sake of novelty, Hume's well-known elogium at the conclusion of the account of his conduct at his execution. Several other substances are got out, which several historians seem to have secreted there for the purpose of giving them the *éclat* of this reproduction.

The expression, "unfortunate Argyle!" attributed to the Earl, at the moment of his being taken, and as the cause of his being recognised, was thought by Fox to be recorded on no good authority. Mr. Rose admits it as authentic, on the testimony of the London Gazette, of that time, and of a paper, printed at Edinburgh, in his possession.

The words in the warrant for Argyle's execution, "*That you take all ways to know from him those things which concern our government most,*" were interpreted by Fox to direct the use of torture; a meaning which, (though not

improbable, as being most perfectly in character for that execrable authority from which the warrant came,) is scarcely admitted by Mr. Rose, because torture was not actually applied. He states, however, that this expedient of justice was in common use in Scotland in those times, though never permitted by the laws in England. The English crown, however, was determined to come in some way or other for a share of the honour; and among other curious particulars, our commentator has given at length a warrant by which King William III. commanded the application of torture in the case of a criminal tried in Scotland, which humane mandate was obeyed with a zealous loyalty.

By a reference to many documents our author has brought much in doubt two incidents related concerning Argyle—the one by Burnet, the other by Woodrow. The first is that of his cautioning Mr. Charteris not to make any attempt to convince him of the criminality of his hostile expedition (a circumstance, however, which carries in itself the strongest probability); the other is that of the anguish said to have been expressed by a member of the Council that pronounced his condemnation, on seeing him calmly sleeping but two hours before the time appointed for his execution. There is some high political orthodoxy in our author's reasoning in behalf of this supposed councillor, that he could not feel, and ought not to feel, any remorse for the condemnation of Argyle, who, though no doubt a very amiable and estimable man, "was taken in open rebellion against his lawful sovereign;" which expression means, we suppose, that if this sovereign had chosen to cause the assassination of all the people in Scotland but one, that one would nevertheless have remained religiously bound in all the obligations of allegiance. It is true, as this writer alleges, that his "sovereign" had not, at the time of Argyle's invasion, unfolded the whole atrocity of his murderous disposition; but he had in his first communication to the Scottish parliament graciously promised (and, if our memory does not deceive us, Mr. Rose himself somewhere says it was the only promise he faithfully kept), that he would carry on the same horrible course of assassination which was perpetrating at the time of his predecessor's death. His conduct in

Scotland, while Duke of York, had given a fair pledge that he was capable of fulfilling his engagements of this kind.

We have no room left for remarks on the various particulars collected concerning the Duke of Monmouth. In this part there seems no very important contrariety between Mr. Rose and the great author on whom he is animadverting. Near the close of these Observations there is a reflection or two on royal prerogatives, constitutional equipoises, and the danger of carrying the doctrines of freedom to excess, to which we might be tempted to give the denomination of *cant*,—but for the pleasing impression which we uniformly feel, in common with our countrymen, of our author's extraordinary and inveterate political disinterestedness.

We do not pretend that we are not a good deal pleased with Sir Patrick Hume's Narrative, or that we do not think it proves some faults in Argyle: when, however, we see a man like the Earl represented as wayward and humoursome, and "petting" at the conduct of his associates, we are fully reminded that we are reading only one side of the story. As to various points of military detail, in which he is charged with error, we think it almost impossible to decide now on what involved so many local and temporary circumstances.

The Appendix contains several interesting articles, especially an account of Sir Patrick Hume's concealment in Scotland, previously to his first escape to the Continent; a much clearer proof than we are gratified to see, that Burnet, as a historian, is to be trusted with great caution; and an account of the last days and the death of the Duke of Monmouth, published speedily after by authority.

ON THEATRICAL AMUSEMENTS.

Four Discourses on Subjects relating to the Amusement of the Stage.
 Preached at Great St. Mary's Church, Cambridge, on Sunday,
 September 25, and Sunday, October 2, 1808; with copious
 Supplementary Notes. By JAMES PLUMTREE, B.D., Fellow
 of Clare Hall. 8vo. 1809.

It is not expressed in the title-page, that these discourses were preached, and are published, with an intention hostile

to the stage; but the reader can have no doubt as to this point, we presume, when informed that they are dedicated to the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Cambridge after having received his approbation, that the author is an admirer of some of our most serious and orthodox divines, that he appears to be actuated by a sincere wish to do good, and that the discourses are founded on no other than the following texts: "Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God."—"Be not deceived, evil communications corrupt good manners."—"Let not foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient, be once named among you, as becometh saints."—"To him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin." A selection of texts so pointedly applicable, will appear to indicate the preacher's correct view of his subject; and shall we not incur the suspicion of wantonly offending against the third injunction, when we state, that notwithstanding all these reasons for a contrary presumption, Mr. Plumtre's discourses are meant as a formal defence of the stage?

Merely that a minister of the Christian religion should have considered it as within the scope and duty of his sacred function to undertake such a defence, will not be a fact of sufficient novelty, in our times, to excite surprise; for it would be ungrateful to charge it on defect of reverend instruction, if we do not know that the play-house is one of our best Christian institutions. But there is something strikingly new in hearing a vindication of the stage from a clergyman, who connects it with a serious admonition that life should be employed in a preparation for eternity, with a zealous inculcation of the apostolic rule of doing all things to the glory of God, with an admission that the general quality of polite literature is decidedly adverse to Christian principles, and with an extended and very instructive illustration of the prevalence of this adverse spirit in even the least exceptionable part of the English drama. If the reader's impression of the incompatibility of what we have here reported to him as combined, should lead him to suspect affectation in the religious parts of the compound, we must assure him there are the strongest marks of sincerity. This being believed, his surmises towards an explanation of such a phenomenon will probably terminate in a conjecture,

that in the preacher's youth, the drama must have inspired a passion so deep as to become like one of the original principles of his mind, which therefore the judgment could never eradicate, nor ever inspect without an involuntary bias operating like a spell. And this is the explanation furnished by the preacher's long dedication, in which he adverts to the leading circumstances of his life, by way of accounting for his writing a book on such a subject, and with such a design.

In course of time he entered, at college, on the studies preparatory to the clerical profession, and obtained a parochial charge, in which his professional duties and studies began entirely to engross his thoughts, "and yielding," he says, "to the prejudices of the world, I determined to relinquish in a great measure the amusement of the stage." He sold a large dramatic library in order to purchase better books, among which were Mrs. More's works, including her dialogue on amusements, and her most excellent preface to her tragedies; these tracts had a great influence on his mind, and for some years he wholly abstained from the amusement of the theatre. "The circumstances of his parish" suggested to him the possible utility of modifying to a moral purpose the most popular convivial songs, of which he has subsequently printed several volumes, with the required expurgations and additions, under the title "Vocal Repository." This occupation revived his attention to the drama, which he had never been persuaded entirely to condemn, though his opinion of it was somewhat altered. In an interval of professional employment, he meditated a set of lectures, to be delivered at the University, partly with a view to the reformation of the stage. This design was not executed; but an opportune occasion was offered for putting some of the collected materials into the form of sermons, to which, when printed, another portion could be appended as notes. The inducement to adopt the form of sermons was, the hope that they might, as public addresses, be of service to other clergymen, situated in the neighbourhood of the various theatres in this country.

Toward the close of this dedicatory introduction, which we have regarded it as a point of justice to notice thus particularly, the author distinctly meets, what he necessarily anticipated, the censure which will be apt to fall on a clergy-

man for composing a volume on such a subject. His apology is, that this is the only way in which he may hope to redeem, in some sense, the time which he regrets he has wasted in former dramatic studies. He esteems his knowledge of the subject as very dearly purchased; but actually having this knowledge, he thinks it his duty to put it to the use of displaying the moral character of the English drama, of attempting its reformation, and we may add, of correcting the opinions of those austere Christians, who insist on the entire destruction of what he thinks capable of being made a "powerful engine to promote the cause of virtue."

The first discourse proposes to argue the question, "Whether the stage be a thing lawful in itself;" but we are not quite satisfied that this question takes the subject in the right point of view. What is meant by the stage "in itself," or abstractedly considered? If by the stage, described under these terms of limitation, the written drama were meant, no question could be more easily decided, than whether it be lawful to write and to read useful and ingenious things in a dramatic form; no question, therefore, could be more needless, and we do not see why several pages of the work should have been occupied in answering it. But understanding by the stage literally the theatre and its performances, we do not exactly comprehend what is meant by the question whether it be lawful "in itself." The estimate of the good or evil of the theatre must necessarily be founded on the combined consideration of a number of particulars; as the qualities of human nature in general, together with their modifications in any one age or nation, —the effect on the human mind of exhausting its passions on fictitious objects, the character of that part of society that will at all times be most addicted to amusements, and will chiefly support them, —the natural attendants and consequences of a passion for splendid amusements, —the tendency and the attendant circumstances of immense nocturnal assemblages of people in great towns, —the quality of the works of the great national dramatic writers, that must necessarily form the main stock of the theatre (till writers shall be put in requisition to dramatize and versify the Homilies and the Whole Duty of Man), —the probable moral character of a set of men and women employed under

the circumstances inseparable from a company of players,—and the vast expense, original and permanent, of the whole theatrical establishment. All these and other particulars are involved in the question of the lawfulness of the stage; and therefore we think any attempt to discuss that lawfulness in the abstract, or “in itself,” would too much resemble a discussion of the lawfulness of war abstractedly from all consideration of national enmity, of battle, wounds, and slaughter, of the barbarizing effect on its agents, of the misery of the countries where it prevails, and of national expense and ruin. We do not say that these two things are perfectly parallel; but we mean that the moral estimate of the stage must be formed on a view of all those circumstances, which are naturally relative to it, which are essential to its existence, or with which in point of fact it has invariably been connected.

Admitting most fully (as every person must, who possesses ordinary moral and religious perceptions), the gross depravity of the theatre in the collective character of its constituents, the plays, the players, and a large portion of the spectators, and deploring its widely pernicious influence, our preacher yet endeavours, by distinguishing between the use and abuse of a thing, to defend the theatre “in itself” against those, who, from all they have seen and can anticipate, pronounce it radically and essentially a mischief. He has told us, from Ecclesiasticus, that “as a nail sticketh fast between the stones, so doth sin stick close between buying and selling,” that “strong drinks and wine” have been abused by intemperance, and that even the public worship of God has been perverted to wickedness; and maintains unanswerably, that we are not therefore to prohibit buying and selling, and the use of wine, and the worship of God. This argument from analogy ought, at its weakest point, to prove that the divine providence has, in the order of nature, made a specific direct provision for a play-house; and as its strongest point, to prove that the pernicious effects of the play-house should be calmly left to the government of God, as an evil become incidental through human depravity to one of his own appointments, which we are not the less bound in duty to observe because it is liable to such a perversion. It should also prove, that the ces-

sation of acting plays would inflict an evil tantamount to breaking up the regular business and intercourse of society.

But not to dwell on such an unfortunate argument, we will say a word or two on the propriety of giving the denomination of *abuses* to the evils uniformly attending the stage. When we speak of the *abuses* of a thing, we cannot mean less than that the thing in question is at least fitted to do greatly more good than harm, even in the present state of the human mind and of society; we understand of it that good is its natural general effect, and evil the incidental, man being as he is. We repeat this conditional point; for, if the thing in question be not calculated mainly to do good *till* human society shall have grown incomparably more virtuous, and thus attained a state capable of neutralizing its operation, or even converting it into something beneficial, it is plainly, for any present use, absolutely bad, necessarily bad, in its regular operation; and to call this operation an *abuse*, is a disingenuous and deceptive language. Now our preacher, while reprobating the obvious mischiefs of the stage under the denomination of "abuses," insists that it is notwithstanding adapted, and may by a very practicable reform be brought to be of the greatest moral utility in the present condition of society. It would be going very much beyond the limits of our office to enumerate the principal arguments (indeed they are amply quoted by Mr. Plumptre) advanced by serious and intelligent men in opposition to his opinion. The best works on the subjects are very well known, and we think the chief good that will be effected by the book before us will be, to induce some of its readers to examine them with more attention. The most material points of the argument were hinted above, in one of the preceding sentences; and in slightly adverting to several of them we shall employ but very few more.

It must be quite obvious for what purpose it is that society chooses to have a theatre, and by what part of society it must be principally supported. And Mr. Plumptre knows it would be disingenuous trifling to pretend, that the theatre is raised and supported, with any other view on the part of the public, than that of amusement. A very few individuals may occasionally, or even habitually, attend it for the purpose of philosophical observation; but

even if these were sincerely anxious to apply the knowledge of human nature there acquired to the service of virtue and religion, which is rarely the case, the circumstance would be inexpressibly too trivial to be mentioned against the notorious fact, that the part of the community that require and frequent a theatre, do it for no purpose even the most distantly related to moral improvement. This would be testified, if it needed any testimony, by every one who has listened to the afternoon conversation of a party arranging and preparing to go to the play, and to the retrospective discussion of this party during the eleven-o'clock breakfast on the following morning; or by any one who has listened to the remarks made around him in any part of the boxes, pit, or galleries. The persons, who are intent on moral or intellectual improvement, will be found occupied in a very different manner, inspecting the works of the great historians, philosophers, moralists, or divines; or holding rational conversations with their families, or friends; or even (if they judge instruction really is to be obtained from that source) reading the most celebrated dramatic works in their own or another language, and with a far more judicious and scrutinizing attention than any one exerts amidst the thousand interfering and beguiling circumstances of the theatre. Now if amusement is the grand object sought at the play-house, the object on copiously ministering to which its existence wholly depends, it must to preserve that existence, adapt itself completely to the taste of that part of society that is devoted to amusement, and will pay its price, in time, health, and money. And what sort of persons are they that compose this part of society? It really might have been accounted superfluous to say that they are necessarily the trifling and the immoral. They are such of the wealthy as have neither occupation nor benevolence; the devotees of fashion; the most thoughtless part of the young, together with what are called young men of spirit, who want a little brisk folly as an interlude to their more vicious pursuits; loungers of all sorts; tradesmen who neglect their business; persons who, in domestic relations, have no notion of cultivating the highest social and intellectual interests; and old debauchees, together with the wretched class of beings, whose numbers, vices, and

miseries, they can still be proud to augment. It is by the part of the community composed of these classes that the theatre is mainly supported; and these it must gratify, or it will perish. And if it must gratify this part of the community, of what moral quality must its exhibitions be? Is it possible to maintain, with a grave face, that those exhibitions can be lessons of pure morality, and even piety,—according to our author's injunction and professed hope that "the stage shall go hand in hand with the pulpit?" The stage will have a beneficial influence, he says, when the writers, actors, and frequenters compose, and act, and attend plays, "with a view to the glory of God," (a most original association of ideas)—and when they preserve amidst these occupations a deep concern for the "salvation of their souls." Now, can he believe that there are twenty frequenters of the play-house in all England, who could hear such a state of mind insisted on as necessary even in the common course of life, without sneering at such notions as rank Methodism; or who would fail to mutter a charge of stark madness, if seriously told it was a necessary state of mind in attending the theatre? Is it not fully settled in the minds of all classes of its frequenters, that it is a place of perfect immunity from grave thought and converse with conscience, and from all puritanism, cant, sermonizing, saintship, godliness, sober representations of life and duty, and squeamish modesty,—excepting so far as some or all of these may be introduced for ridicule, in which mode of introduction, indeed, they are probably greater favourites with an English theatrical audience than all other subjects? In short, are not the entertainments of the theatre resorted to and delighted in as something confessedly, avowedly, and systematically opposite, to what is understood by its frequenters to have formed the chief concern, the prominent and unpopular distinction, of the most devout and holy men, of dying penitents, of Christian apostles, of all the persons most deeply solicitous for the "glory of God," and the "salvation of their souls?" Mr. Plumptre will fully agree with us, for he has himself very forcibly shown, that, with certain fluctuations, and some degree of modern amendment, in the article of decorum, this has always been the character of the stage, and is the character of the great

body of our written drama. And why has this been uniformly the character? Are we to believe that the writers and actors, with an unparalleled contempt of self-interest, have been for several hundred years forcing on their grand and sole patron, the public, a species of dramatic exhibitions disapproved by that patron? On the contrary, these writers and players have always been to the full as sagacious with respect to their own interest, as any other class of persons who are to prosper or flourish according to the acceptance or disapproval of what they furnish to the public market; and quite as obsequious in accommodating to the public taste. In a few instances, indeed, it may have been attempted to make the stage a pure Christian moralist, and a sort of half-Christian divine; and the attempt has failed. It deserved to fail; for, if a manufacturer in any department absolutely *will* make his goods of a quality and form quite different from what he knows the public have uniformly required in that sort of article, nobody compassionates him for the consequences. And we would ask Mr. Plumptre, where is the reasonableness and humanity of requiring the writers and actors of plays to commit a professional suicide by provoking the disgust and indignation of their supporters? The present time shows what an imperious aspect the public, that is, the play-going public, can assume when they are not pleased; and if, instead of the trifling alteration of a little advance in price, there were to be introduced a moral change to one half the extent demanded by our preacher, a change which would instantly give the denomination of "Methodist Theatre," can any one believe this genteel and vulgar rabble would not bellow to a still nobler tune if possible, and fairly baffle at last the utmost rhetoric of the journalists in attempting, even with the aid of the Miltonic diction, to describe the "confusion" still "worse confounded?" Parson Kemble, or Saint Cooke, after having once appeared, seriously, in the Gospel Scene, would prefer taking the second turn in the pillory at Charing Cross.

In thus predicting the treatment awaiting the stage when turned Methodist, we have not misrepresented our preacher as to the extent of the conversion which he demands. He insists, with respect to the drama, as it ought to be insisted

with respect to every institution which is to be retained in society, that its entire spirit and tendency must be made strictly coincident with the Christian religion; and he perfectly agrees with Mrs. More and several other writers, that, besides all the more gross and tangible immorality adhering to our drama, there is a decidedly anti-Christian quality prevailing through almost its whole mass, so that even most of its greatest beauties please with a noxious lustre. Consistently, therefore, he requires the stage to be purified from its many modes of heathenism, from its erroneous conceptions of divine justice and the atonement of guilt, from its profane language, from its pernicious notions of honour, from its encouragement and extenuations of suicide and duelling, from its extravagant and often corrupt representations of love, and from its indelicacy. And all these things, we are to believe, may be swept away in the very face of the persons who are paying expressly for their continuance, and by whom the pure Christian contraries of all these things will be received with abhorrence, unless, while the transmutation is taking place on the stage, a sudden conversion also visits the minds of the audience, as when Peter was preaching. But no, says our author, the change is to be gradual, something is already effected, and "we must go on to 'perfection.'" It is true that a very slight, superficial amendment has taken place, in avoiding the excessive, undisguised grossness which prevailed on the stage in a former century, and this is because the age is grown more delicate, not, probably, because the audience are much more moral; for, does Mr. Plumptre really believe that the theatre now contains a less proportion of profligate men and women than in former times? But, taking this slight, superinduced refinement at whatever he can seriously think it worth, we have his own testimony that the pervading heathenism and profaneness, the detestable moral principles and the romantic extravagance, remain nearly undiminished; and we would therefore ask him how many ages, at this rate of improvement, we are to be waiting for the stage to attain even the point of *neutrality* between good and evil of moral and religious influence. And should not the melancholy thought of so many tens of thousands, whose principles, with respect to the most important

subjects and concerns, are to be acted upon by a powerfully pernicious influence in the course of this long period, have impelled him to exhort his auditors and readers to an instant withdrawal of all countenance and support from one of the worst enemies of human virtue and happiness? Instead of which, we lament to find a minister of the Christian religion advising the respectable inhabitants of places where plays are acted to attend them, in order to influence the selection of the pieces and the manners of the company.

Against those who assert the radical evil of the stage, and instead of devising remedies, urge the duty of entirely relinquishing it, he raises a strange, and what he seems to think conclusive argument, from the simple fact that the stage is still in existence: as if he would say, It must be a good thing, or capable of being made so, and claims that we should all join hand and heart to support and improve it, because—all efforts to put it down have been unavailing.

It may be hardly worth while to notice, that there seems here an admission that the people are not good enough to reform, any more than they are to give up, a corrupt stage; or to observe, that it is unfair to complicate the question, whether individuals ought to abandon the theatre, with the question whether the state ought to suppress it. But as to the fact which he makes into an argument, namely, that the stage *still exists*, we may properly say to Mr. Plumptre, What is that to you, or to us? There *exist* also dens of gamblers, and gangs of thieves, and brothels, and clubs for gluttony, drunkenness, and ribaldry; but you or we are not therefore called upon to study the *better regulation* of these associations, and sometimes to go among them as a "check on their improprieties." The complaint that the adversaries of the stage have not employed "conciliating" measures is passing strange as coming from a Christian divine, who tells us that one of those adversaries (Bedford), has cited in his book "*nearly seven thousand instances of impiety and immorality* from the plays in use at that time, and some of which (though in rather an amended state), still keep a place upon the stage." (P. 36.) If such a hideous monster was a thing capable of being "vilified," or deserving to be "conciliated," what is it on this side the infernal pit that we can lawfully make relentless war upon?

Our argument above has been, that it is impossible for the stage to become good, in any such Christian sense as Mr. Plumptre requires; because its character must be faithfully congenial with that of its supporters, and they chiefly consist of the more trifling, irreligious, and immoral part of the community. But perhaps our author thinks that if the stage, by a resolute effort of its directors, were quite to change its character, and become the mirror of Christian sentiments and morals, it might obtain a better class of supporters, and thus afford to lose the frivolous and the dissolute. And if this were possible, is it desirable? We are not convinced it would be any great advantage gained to the happiness of society, if we were to see the great temple of wisdom and virtue in Covent Garden lined with an auditory of right reverend bishops, zealous ministers, and the worthiest part of their flocks, dressed in sober faces and decent apparel, rank above rank, up to the region of what used to be called "the gods;" if we were to see the pit occupied by a battalion of quakers; if worthy, domestic men, who have been accustomed to pass their evenings in reading with their wives and sisters, after half an hour's sport with their children, were to commence the practice of either sliding off alone, or taking their families along with them, to the new rendezvous of saints and philosophers; or if virtuous young men, qualifying by diligent study for important professions, and young women qualifying for their wives, were seen flocking to the dramatic oracle to inquire how to combine wisdom and love. But if all this were ever so much "a consummation devoutly to be wished," it would never be attained; and the mansion of the christened Apollo might be surrendered to the bats, unless he would forswear his newly adopted and unprofitable faith, and again invite the profane and profligate. The orderly, industrious, studious, benevolent, and devout, would never, in any state of the theatre, frequent it in sufficient numbers to defray the cost of dresses and wax candles. And besides, what becomes during this hopeful experiment of that worse part of the community which the stage, according to our author, was to have helped the gospel to reform? They are the while wandering away, perverse and hapless beings! from the most precious school ever opened

for the corrective discipline of sinners. But the place, originally intended to please them, will not long be occupied by the usurping morality that would assume to mend them. Like the unclean spirit, they will soon re-enter the swept and garnished house, and even, like him, bring auxiliary companions, the more effectually to assert *whose* house it is. We will not waste more words. Mr. Plumptre knows that no theatre could support itself under the odium of maintaining an explicit hostility against not only direct grossness and vice, but all anti-Christian principles of morality. It is a ruined thing if not only the women of the town, and the vile gangs of journeymen and gentlemen blades that frequent the place to joke with them, purchase them, or insult them, but also the more decorous holders of a fashionable moral creed, are to be dosed there with Christian mendicaments, and fumigated off with an effluvium a hundred times more nauseous to them than the smell of the burning fish was to the goblin that haunted Tobias's bride. As long as there is a play-house, it will and must be assumed, as their legitimate place of resort, by the least serious and the most irreligious and profligate class of the nation. Where else, indeed, should they resort?—to the evening lecture at church or at the conventicle? Thus the stage, so far from contributing to promote the ascendancy of good over evil in society, will be the faithful attendant and ally of the evil, at once living on it and ministering to it, just so long as a sufficient measure of it shall exist in the shape of vain and profligate persons to support the amusement, and perishing at length when Christianity shall have left too few of these persons for this purpose. Or shall we suppose it will then arise and flourish afresh under a renovated, Christianized character? That is to say, shall we suppose, that at such a happy period it will be deemed one of the worthiest efforts of virtue and religion to raise and furnish edifices at the expense of £150,000 a-piece, and maintain in each of them, at a cost equal to that of several hospitals, or of some fifty or a hundred of Lancaster's schools, an establishment just for the purpose of employing a number of persons to sham the name and dress of certain fictitious foreigners, or, if you please, good home-bred Christians, and recite a course of lines from a book which the audience could have quietly

read at home; and, if they are tragic lines, read, according to the opinion of Dr. Johnson, with a deeper impression?

This view of the necessary character of the stage forms but a narrow section of the argument against it; and we have dwelt on it, not with the design of anything so absurd as debating the general subject in an article of a journal, but for the particular purpose of exposing Mr. Plumptre's doctrine that "the evil attached to the stage is no part of its inherent quality, but arises merely from the *abuse* of it." (P. 7.) With regard to many of the specific evils attendant on the theatre, he has himself done ample justice to the subject, partly by quoting, with a candour not to be surpassed, and deserving of the highest applause, a number of the strongest passages from the adversaries of the stage, Collier, Law, Witherspoon, Styles, &c., and partly by an indictment drawn up by himself, of which the several counts are excellently illustrated and sustained by passages furnished by his extensive acquaintance with the English drama. These illustrations are placed in the mass of notes at the end of the book, which form a very entertaining and instructive miscellany. One portion of these notes is a kind of marshalling of great names against Mr. Styles, who had ventured to boast that the most venerable authorities, the most illustrious moralists and philosophers of all ages, have been enemies of the stage; too rash a boast as it should seem; for Mr. Plumptre has proved that Bishop Rundle of most *pious* celebrity, that Mr. Cumberland, and Mr. Dibdin, and a Mrs. Douglas, which last person tells "the theologians and philosophers" they have no business to say a word about a subject so much above their faculties as the merits of the drama,—that these illustrious authorities are in favour of the stage. Not, however, that these are the only names in array; for he cites, on the same side, opinions, or implications variously modified and limited, from Addison, Blackmore, Tillotson, Seed, Hanway, Johnson, Gilpin, and Gisborne. It is irksome enough to see quoted from such a writer as this last, "the stage ought to recommend itself as the nurse of virtue." In another part of the book it is quoted from him, that there is one quarter from which the purification of the stage, with respect to all offences against modesty, "might be effected at once;

to those who act under a royal license, a single hint from Royal Authority would be sufficient." And why then, we ask, has not this purification been effected? We might ask too, whether it is any part of the purification which this "hint" is, to accomplish, to banish from the stage persons whose whole life is an offence against modesty.

We are ashamed to find a Christian minister vindicating, under any circumstances, the impious practice of addressing the Deity on the stage.

"Many, indeed (says Mr. Plumptre), have doubted and denied the propriety of addresses to the Deity in *representations*, because they are not realities. But, if a character be introduced as an example for our imitation, in such a circumstance, as were he in real life, trust in God and prayer to him would be a duty, provided it be done with reverence, it does not appear to be a mockery and in vain, but a highly useful lesson. Are we not too little accustomed, too much ashamed to let ourselves be seen, or known to be on our knees before God, in real life? We are commanded, indeed, not to pray in *public*, for the sake of being *seen* of men; for the motive ought to be to please God; but we are commanded to let our light so shine before men, *that they may see our good works*, and GLORIFY OUR FATHER WHO IS IN HEAVEN.— P. 29.

We must think with Mr. Styles, that "a fictitious character on the stage has nothing to do with heaven." The personation of such a character in the act of prayer endeavours to pass itself for some very undefinable species of *reality*, and claims to excite nearly the same feelings that reality would do. It is intended, therefore, that the prayer in question shall be regarded rather as a real act of piety, than as the mere historical reading or reciting, if we may so express ourselves, of a prayer supposed to have been uttered by the character whom the player personates. This being the case, the player does assume to make, and the audience are called to witness, an *actual address to the Deity*, expressive of sentiments, and relative to a situation, which are totally fictitious; and this we think the vilest impiety.

As to the benefit arising from seeing examples of mingling piety with the concerns of life, the playhouse, with all its mass of profaneness and ribaldry, must be a marvellous proper place for making the exhibition, and receiving the edification.

CHARACTERS OF FOX.

Characters of the late Charles James Fox, selected, and in part written, by PHILOPATRIS VARVICENSIS. 8vo. 2 vols. 1809.

VERY few pages of the original part of this work could have been read by any one at all acquainted with the style of Mr. Parr, without confidently guessing at the real name of Philopatris Varvicensis, even if the introduction had not avowed that the work is from the same hand as the noted preface to Bellendenus. The avowal is made in a singularly inartificial manner, purporting that *this* author has the permission of *that* author to insert a part of that preface, and that the authors are one.

It may be deemed an act of condescension, in one of the first scholars in Europe, to take a collection of extracts from newspapers, magazines, reviews, funeral sermons, and fugitive poetry, for the basis of an ample literary structure, which was to display the attributes and decorations of all the orders of literary architecture. The proceeding is certainly no inconsiderable proof, that an author may be very learned, intimately acquainted with his subject, and an enthusiast concerning it, without necessarily despising everything that has been written on that subject by his contemporaries. The talents and acquirements of Philopatris will be the more freely applauded by every reader, from their being unaccompanied with any signs of the superciliousness, jealousy, and envy, which have often so seriously deducted from the claims of men of learning and wit.

An impartial execution of the humble office of making such selection, whoever had undertaken it, would deserve to be acknowledged, we think, as a service to the public. Apart from any consideration of the literary qualities, good, or bad, of the pieces forming this miscellany, it compels us to allow it some degree of importance, when we reflect, that if we could ascertain all the readers of each of the pieces, it is a very moderate computation that more than a million of persons have read or heard read with real interest, and with a decidedly approving or disapproving opinion, some of the composition contained within these

hundred and sixty pages. We have, therefore, within this space a portion of writing, which has engaged an extent and a degree of attention which may probably never be excited, in the same brief space of time by any set of critical, moral, and biographical essays on one subject, that we shall ever again see brought together. It is also reasonable to believe that, under the aid of that state of national feeling which was produced by the solemnity of the occasion, these pieces may have had a greater effect on the popular mind with regard to its views of what may be termed the morality of politics, than any other equal quantity of temporary productions. They will, besides, when thus collected, and preserved for another age, in a richer portion of classical condiment than probably any other person than this editor could have furnished, remain an amusing and instructive record of the kind of political and moral sentiments entertained, at the period when they were written, by a large proportion of our nation, as well as a tolerably competent memorial of the qualities of that wonderful man to whom they relate: and it is agreed on all hands that a very full memorial ought to be transmitted to posterity, since the subject is such a person as they probably may never see.

The collection contains a great deal of good writing, though but few specimens of the highest order. In the sum of the effect of all these delineations, the reader will be in possession of a bold and substantially just idea of the man, provided he is sufficiently instructed in Christianity to make, from his own judgment, certain corrections in the moral lights and shades, in touching which very few of these numerous painters seem to have recollected or cared to direct a single look towards the standard of character held forth in revelation. A man like Fox, it should seem, is quite beyond the cognizance of Christianity. But this point we may slightly notice a page or two further on. To say that the prominent lines of Fox's character are justly drawn in many of these pieces, is no very high praise; the distinctions of that character being so strong, obvious, and simple, that a very moderate degree of skill was sufficient to discriminate and describe them. It may be easier to describe the Giant's Causeway or Mount Ætna, than many of the most diminutive productions of nature, or most trifling

works of art. It was said of Fox's countenance, that the most ordinary artist could not well contrive to fail of producing some tolerable likeness of features so marked; and in the same manner, even the least accomplished of the thirty describers of his mind, here brought together, has found it easy enough to tell of his vast comprehension, his natural logic, his power of simplifying, his unaffected energy, his candour, his bold and plain language, and his friendly, plain manners. In point of dignity the subject was worthy of Macintosh, whose celebrated eulogium is inserted among the rest; but at the same time its obviousness was such, that all the dulness of Messrs. — and —, belabouring and contorting itself, to the pain and pity of all beholders, to bring out something that should seem knowing and philosophic, new and fine, could not miss the substantial truth—and has not prevented their perceiving nor their saying, though in the most affected and pompous idiom, just the same things that have been plain to every body these forty years. It could not be supposed there was any great difficulty in saying such things; yet for having said such things, with a due portion of rhetoric, worked out of commonplace into conceit or bombast, many a writer, possessed of less discrimination than would have been required for sketching the character of his errand-boy, has taken credit to himself as an eloquent and sagacious eulogist of Mr. Fox, whose death supplied so excellent an occasion to all who were capable of working in prose or rhyme. The occasion was indeed so singularly good for a piece of fine composition, that we really are tempted to doubt the sincerity of some of these eloquent writers, when they are professing to deplore it. We apprehend that persons desperately set on being fine writers, have a different mode from other men of estimating the loss of heroes and patriots; nor is there any doubt on earth that we have a very considerable number of persons in England, whose strongest emotion on entering Westminster Abbey, and approaching the spot where Fox's remains are deposited, would arise from the complacent recollection of the splendid paragraphs they had been moved to indite by the event that consigned him to the dust. And if, on the spot, this self-gratulation should yield by degrees to more gloomy sentiments, the fair probability is,

that one of the most prevailing of these sentiments would arise from the consideration, that there is no chance of such another opportunity of shining. These observations may appear of a cynical cast, but we are nevertheless confident of the concurring judgment of every discerning person who shall deliberately read through the whole of this selection; for along with a considerable share of very intelligent and reasonable authorship, there is a noble quantity of elaborate bombastic extravagance, vain artifice of diction, and affectation of philosophic development; precisely the right sort of composition to prove the writers devoid of any real sorrow for the mournful event, and most specifically fitted to become ridiculous when forcing itself with a singularly unlucky perversity into a contrast with the simplicity and strength of Fox's eloquence. In any place that allowed room, it might be both amusing and beneficial to make a formal exhibition of this contrast; in our page it will be enough to quote a few short specimens of a kind of eloquence, to which it ought to be confessed even by Mr. Fox's warmest admirers, that his genius would never have mounted nor dared to aspire. It is proper to premise, that the learned editor's impartiality has admitted several pieces in which Fox's praises are given under the bias of hostile party spirit.

The oratorical extravagance that scorns the just rules of rhetoric, can seldom be contented with itself till it has also offered some insult to those of religion. In the present collection it is very remarkable, however, that the newspaper and magazine panegyrists have in a good measure avoided this sin, and left it to be committed almost exclusively by the *reverend* writers. Thus we have one preacher of religion calling Fox's eloquence "divine," and saying that he predicted the consequences of the political measures adopted at a particular crisis with a "precision little short of inspiration;" another averring that, as to prescience, "his mind seemed to brighten with a ray of divinity;" another ascribing "boundless stretch of thought," and still another declaring that "the comprehension of his mind was almost unlimited," and apostrophizing the Deity in the following terms:—

"Gracious God! we bend in submission to thy will: we acknowledge thine infinite wisdom, and we adore thy righteous though inscrutable dispensations; but, when the little passions of the present day are extinct and forgotten, remote generations shall lament that it was thy pleasure to take away from thy favoured land, in the very moment when he was most required, this efficient instrument of thy benevolence; and shall reverently ask of thee why thine economy has only once, in a long succession of ages, imparted to an individual of our species so powerful a genius to design, and so ardent a desire to accomplish the purposes of good."—P. 148.

This address to the Almighty does really appear to us like a very broad hint to him that he must now, in assisting our nation, do as well as he can with inferior means; having unaccountably deprived himself of the very best instrument he ever had for the purpose. It at least strangely forgets, in the divine presence, how absolutely the efficiency of all means depends on the divine will. We say nothing of the injudiciousness and extravagance of thus assuming, in an address to the Being who knows all men, that a particular English senator was colossally superior, in genius and benevolence, to the whole human race for "a long succession of ages;" and representing that "remote generations" will be almost moved to expostulate with the Supreme Governor on account of this senator having died at so premature an age as fifty-nine.

The impiety of attributing without ceremony the deliverance and safety of nations, not only in general to mere human agency, but also specifically to this or the other individual, prevails in this collection in about the same degree as in the general course of conversation. One instance, however, occurs of remonstrance against this notion in the latter shape, and we are tempted to quote it as containing a wonder; for while transferring dependence for national salvation from individual men to the general spirit of the people, it does nevertheless actually seem to recognize in passing, that there exists something greater than man.

"But, profound as our grief is, and deeply as our sensibility is wounded, we must say, we were never of the number of those who imagined that the ruin or the salvation of the country depended on Mr. Fox, Mr. Pitt, or any other man, however elevated in rank, or distinguished by talents—but, under Providence,

to the public spirit of the people themselves. Of this opinion we remain ; and much as we wished for the life, and deeply as we deplore the death, of this transcendently great man, we fear not for our country. Those on whose conduct her welfare depends still live, and will continue to live so long as the waves shall encircle her shores. Kings, heroes, and statesmen—Edwards, Henriès, Marlboroughs, Nelsons, Pitts, and Foxes, from time to time flourish and disappear—the people never die ! Then let them know their own dignity—let them depend on their own virtue—let them endeavour, let them deserve, to be free and invincible—and till their sea can be dried up, and their rocks crumbled, they shall never be conquered or enslaved.”

Though certainly not sorry to learn that there *is* such a thing as Providence, that is, we suppose, the government of the Deity, we may be allowed to entertain some little doubt and fear, whether, under that government, such shouts of self-idolatry, such explosions of pride and presumption, are the best omens of ultimate triumph. It is not so long since, but that we can remember sentiments and language very much in this strain being circulated among the Austrian people and armies, a little after the battle of Esslingen—we should rather say, a little before the battle of Wagram.

In entering on the perusal of a large assemblage of characters of Fox, most of them from the opening sentences, avowedly encomiastic, it was inevitable to anticipate for the writers a considerable degree of difficulty in combining a language of almost unbroken eulogy on the character, with the language of reverential respect to religious and moral principles. This respect, we were to take it as a matter of course, would at any rate be sacredly maintained by the Christian ministers who appeared among the writers. We shall bring together a few short extracts, to show, that, if it is not too flattering an estimate of the religious and moral sentiments of the British people, laic and ecclesiastic, to take this selection as the standard, we have good reason to contrast ourselves so complacently with the infidels across the Channel.

Moral and religious principles are more distinctly adverted to, in connexion with Fox's character, in a piece to which the editor has prefixed, we suppose on sufficient authority,

the name of the "Rev. Robert Fellowes," than in any part of the collection. In a literary point of view, also, the paper is remarkable, as displaying one of the most violent quarrels with unkind Minerva that we have ever witnessed. From beginning to end it is a furious effort to be grand, to be profound, to be comprehensive, to be imperial, to be oracular, and all so exactly in Fox's own simple manner,—as witness abundance of sentences like these: "The heart of Mr. Fox was tenanted by none of those squalid forms which appear to have fixed their dwelling in that of Mr. Pitt;" "as the opinions which Mr. Fox maintained were founded on the basis of justice and of truth, they partook of the sanctity and eternity of moral obligation;" "his was an ambition of a noble kind—it was never forsaken by justice, and it mounted even to the heavens on the wing of humanity." But it is only on account of the reverend writer's austere notions of morality and religion that we notice this paper more particularly than the others.

"Many who have no religion themselves, or in whom the varnish of exterior decorum is employed as a substitute for virtue, have often vented their slanders on the vices of Mr. Fox. But, of those vices which are of the most unsocial and malignant cast, we do not believe that one can fairly be laid to his charge. The impetuous ardour of his temperament, and the restless activity of his mind, which, in whatever was the object of pursuit, never stagnated in indifference, often made him pass the limits of discretion. But the frigid calculations of mercantile prudence seem to be suited only to ordinary minds. The mind of Mr. Fox was not of that class."—P. 169.

Does the reverend writer also *preach* that, provided men have an "impetuous ardour of temperament," the difference between virtue and vice is for their sakes reduced by the Divine Lawgiver to a point of *discretion*? Does he expressly teach the young men who are destroying themselves in the baggio and the gambling-house, that their proper answer to the admonitions of their distressed parents or other friends is, "that the calculations of mercantile prudence are suited only to ordinary minds?" It is curious to think what an outcry of affected horror there would have been, if any of the clergymen distinguished by the term *evangelical* had let such a passage appear under his name. It is followed, in the

way of challenge to the hypocrites or the puritans, with an ostentatious enumeration of the bad things of which Mr. Fox was not guilty; just as if it were the grossest illiberality to censure any character till it is stained and loaded with every vice of which human nature is capable. The passage bearing a reference to religion runs thus :—

“Though Mr. Fox was no formal religionist, yet the essence of religion which centres in charity was the predominant sensation of his heart. If religion consists in doing to others as we would they should do to us, if it have any connexion with a holy endeavour to preserve peace on earth and good will among men (and what Christian will deny this ?) then we will venture to say, that Mr. Fox, who never made any show of religion, was, in fact, one of the most religious men of the age. The great object of his political life was to prevent the havoc of war, and preserve the world in peace.”—P. 171.

With respect to these sentences we have only to say, that we cannot wish to reduce a reverend subscriber to the thirty-nine “Articles of Religion” to any awkward necessity of plainly declaring whether he thinks a *belief of the truth*, that is, of *the divine origin*, of Christianity, is at all of the “essence” of a religious character.

All this is suffered to pass by the reverend Philopatris Varvicensis, who, by the fact of selecting the pieces, is to be understood, as he observes in the preface, as giving “a proof that his own mind was not unfavourably impressed with the propriety of the matter or the graces of the style.”

The reader will naturally inquire how the reverend Editor has acquitted himself, on the same subjects, in his own person. In the extract from the preface to Bellendenus, very properly placed at the head of this series of “characters,” Philopatris has purchased a kind of license to exert his ingenuity in the character of apologist, by first pronouncing a decided censure in the character of moralist.

In his letter of nearly a hundred and forty pages, which follows the “selection” he adverts to Mr. Fox’s religious principles in one interesting paragraph which we shall transcribe.

“Of Mr. Fox’s religious tenets, I cannot speak so fully as, from motives not of impertinent curiosity, but of friendly anxiety, you may be disposed to wish. But I have often remarked that,

upon religious subjects he did not talk irreverently, and generally appeared unwilling to talk at all before strangers or friends. When we look back to the studies, and indeed the frailties of his youth, it were idle to suppose that he was deeply versed in theological lore. Yet, from conversations which have incidentally passed between him and myself, I am induced to think that, according to the views he had taken of Christianity, he did not find any decisive evidence for several doctrines which many of the wisest of the sons of men have believed with the utmost sincerity, and defended with the most powerful aids of criticism, history, and philosophy. But he occasionally professed, and from his known veracity, we may be sure that he inwardly felt, the highest approbation of its pure and benevolent precepts. Upon these, as upon many other topics, he was too delicate to wound the feelings of good men, whose conviction might be firmer and more distinct than his own. He was too wise to insult with impious mockery the received opinions of mankind, when they were favourable to morality. He preserved the same regard to propriety, the same readiness to attend to information, when it was offered to him without sly circumvention, or pert defiance, the same respect to the virtues and attainments of those who differed from him, and the same solicitude for the happiness of his fellow creatures. Thus much may be said with propriety, because it can be said with truth; and glad should I be if it were in my power to say more upon a point of character, which, in such a man, could not escape the observation of the serious, the misconceptions of the ignorant, and the censures of the uncharitable."—P. 219.

Ought we to pretend to be at a loss as to the real meaning of this statement? and when we find it followed by what we sincerely wish we could call by any other denomination, than an apology for religious scepticism? The apology is indeed conditional, the benefit of it being restricted to those who "are too discreet to proclaim their speculative scruples, and too decorous to disseminate them." This propriety being preserved inviolate, "perhaps," says our learned divine, "in many cases it is for the Searcher of all hearts alone to determine either the merit of assent, or the demerit of suspense;" the import of which observation the reader had better not examine, if he is resolved that a Christian minister *shall* not be understood to insinuate, that we may disregard those parts of divine revelation which declare positively that no man to whom that revelation is presented

can with innocence and impunity withhold his acceptance. This reference to the "Searcher of hearts" in behalf of scepticism, in contempt of his own unequivocal denunciations of the guilt and punishment of unbelief, is with consistency enough, and without much further dereliction of Christian principles, followed, towards the close of this eloquent essay, by a direct invasion of that awful secret office of judgment which had just been pretended to be left to his own sovereign authority; for that sovereign secret judgment is invaded, when the decision is here boldly assumed; and the decision is here boldly assumed in the case of the deceased statesman, the "demerits," and therefore the consequences, of whose scepticism were, as we understood, to have been left to the sole judgment of the "Searcher of hearts." There is no sign of the trembling awe which would naturally accompany such a reference and the uncertainty respecting the result, when our author says, "In the bosoms of those who attended him in his last moments, it (the complacent character of his death) must excite the most serious wishes, that their own end 'may be like his,' and to himself, we trust, it was, in the language of Milton, 'a gentle wafting to immortal life.'" But as if doubtful, nevertheless, of the propriety of expressing the confidence in a form liable to be brought to the test of revelation, our divine adopts the words of Tacitus concerning Agricola, "*Si quis piorum manibus locus, si, ut sapientibus placet, non cum corpore extinguuntur magnæ animæ; placide quiescat,*" &c.

No religious reader of the series of extracts given in the last few pages, can fail to be struck with the reflection to what an unknown extent the mischief may be too reasonably apprehended to reach, which is done by a character in which superlative talents and some unquestionable virtues are combined with vice and the absence of religious principles, when it is seen that even the teachers of religion are by such a character seduced to betray it. It is obvious how powerful the depraving influence is likely to be on other men, who have not the information, the convictions, or the responsibility, implied and involved in the sacred profession, and who are perhaps half vicious and half sceptical already, if that influence is so strong as to make one most learned

Christian divine, in a work intended and expected to go down to a future age, confidently dismiss to those abodes of the blessed* which Christianity only assures its disciples, the person whom he has just confessed (we cannot honestly interpret the passage in any other sense) to be not a believer in the truth of that religion;—if the influence is so strong as to make another divine proclaim with triumph that “He died with the blessed hope of a Christian;”—if it is so strong as to make a third divine declare his exaltation “above yon azure vault of blazing stars;”—and so strong as to make a fourth pronounce him “one of the most religious men of the age,” and scout, in highly laboured sentences of contempt, the ill-natured moralists, or the hypocrites, who would describe some of the most pernicious vices in any other terms than, “passing the limits of discretion.” There was evidently no need of the assistance of these reverend gentlemen, to make the influence sufficiently extensive and mischievous; and how it may comport with the sacred profession, the grand object of which is to urge the infinite importance of the religion of Christ, to act as auxiliaries of that influence, must be left to their own consciences.

We must also remark how ungenerous it is to the memory of the great statesman, thus to force his character before the public in the precise form, and as if for the precise purpose, of a palliative of vice and religious indifference or unbelief. His pretended friends, when they might have maintained the continuity of their encomium by avoiding to advert to these points, choose formally to recognize them as parts of a character, which, notwithstanding these very serious evils, having still many excellences, and being great and imposing, they can hold up with an air of malicious triumph that seems to say, “Now brand these vices, and denounce, with your godly illiberality, this disregard of Christianity, if you dare; for in so doing you will attack one of the greatest geniuses and sincerest patriots of the age; you will insult the revered memory of the illustrious

* Unless indeed our divine believes, according to Tacitus and his “sapientes,” in the existence of some elysium, some other happy state of spirits, distinct from that revealed in the New Testament, in the existence of which he also believes.

Fox." It is the old military stratagem of protecting the front from attack, by covering it with persons accounted privileged or sacred. The religious critic is reduced to the alternative, of either letting these reverend gentlemen have everything their own way with respect to the slightness of the harm and final danger of gaming, libertinism, and scepticism,—or incurring the imputation of illiberality, perhaps malignity, towards the splendid qualities of Fox; which, in these eulogiums, are artfully disposed for throwing their rays across the deep moral and religious shades of the character, and thus giving them a deceptive appearance of extenuated evil. This imputation can be averted by no professions of admiration of his stupendous talents, of his zeal and labours in the cause of freedom and peace, and of his kind and ingenuous disposition; professions which, if they were not a most needless tribute to a character so pre-eminently rich in fame, we should make with a sentiment rather more cordially emphatic, we think, than the most pompous and sonorous of these congregated rhetoricians. They are many of them too fine, and too much occupied with themselves as being so fine, to reach the pitch of our regret that the nation has now no such man to place at the head of its affairs; and we perceive such momentous interests, as scarcely ever occurred to the thoughts of these panegyrists, involved in those doctrines of freedom of which Fox was so noble an advocate. But all this will avail us nothing with a certain class of people, unless we accede to a suspension in *his* favour of the obligations of Christian morality and Christian faith. We must, however, take the consequences of venturing to assume, against such persons in general, and against some of these reverend gentlemen in particular, that, if the Christian religion be true, the vicious squandering of great pecuniary means of doing good, and the revels of almost boundless libertinism, followed by an illicit connexion protracted to a late period of life, are great crimes in any man; and that they acquire an aggravation, instead of a diminution, of their turpitude, by being connected with an exalted intellect; and we must endure as well as we can the contempt of the Rev. Philopatria, the Rev. Mr. Fellowes, &c., for the fanaticism of doubting whether a sceptical indifference to Christianity is exactly

the proper state of mind to constitute a man "one of the most religious men of the age," or to authorize the confidence which, after he is departed, assigns him to the company of the spirits of the just.

If the junta of panegyrists had carefully abstained from whatever would interfere with the laws of religion, and confined themselves to a display of Fox's character as a statesman, an orator, a scholar, and a gentleman, it might have been no compulsory duty of serious critics to remind the reader, that the possession of the specific excellences appropriate to these characters cannot transfer the individual into a distinct economy from that in which the Divine Being has placed the rest of the species, with regard to religious obligations and the pre-requisites to future happiness; and if duty permitted them to be silent on this head, assuredly policy, in these times, would enjoin them to be so. But when, instead of this abstinence, the writers before us have expressly and optionally pointed at religion in order virtually to explode it by means of Mr. Fox's character, we are compelled to offend some readers perhaps once more, by asserting (notwithstanding our ardent love of liberty and admiration of Mr. Fox), that it is necessary for a man to be a Christian, even *though* he be an excellent statesman and consummate orator.

The letter of Philopatriis completes the first volume. It combines sketches of Mr. Fox's character, with a desultory discussion of the political principles on which he acted, and a great number of incidental topics, moral, philosophical, and literary. The writer's mind is teeming over with all manner of knowledge, and unfettered from all manner of method. Not however that he cannot when he pleases show himself a most perfect master of every art of arrangement, and every dexterity of logic. But he is too sprightly to carry on this arrangement and logic with a protracted regularity. The composition runs, jumps, and darts along a mazy and endless series of luckinesses, smartnesses, quaintnesses, artifices, acutenesses, and brilliances. At every inch the irregular track is beset with subtilties, discriminations, and antitheses. Between vivid fancy and intellectual sharpness, all the paragraphs are just like *chevaux de frize*; throw them in any way you please, they still present a point. And for

passing with perfect ease from one department of literature and knowledge to another, Philopatris is the very Mercury. Nay, we will acknowledge our suspicions that we have got an avatar of the Hindoo god Crishna, of whom it is recorded that, at one particular season in ancient times, he would present himself, all at his ease, in whichever of a vast variety of apartments the amazed beholder might successively look into. Within the space of a dozen pages, our author shall be found in the ancient classics and the modern reviews; in politics and in particles; in antiquities and incidents of the day; in theology, morals, history, poetry, and contemporary biography; in the company of Solon and Thales, and that of Sir Samuel Romilly. And yet, from his mind being so full of analogies, which approach to a contact at so many points, his transitions do not appear awkward or abrupt. But the transition in which he shows the most amazing facility, is that from all things and languages into Greek. By some inconceivable law of juxta-position, he seems on the very edge of this at all times and places.

In this slight description, we refer fully as much to the volume of notes as to the letter concerning Fox, in which letter the strong interest of friendship has kept the writer more constant to his subject. In many points, this letter does eminent justice to the subject, as it abounds with acute discriminations.

The volume of notes is absolutely a Hercynian forest, on which, after the undue length of time already expended on the work, we must not enter. The mass is not the less multifarious, from its being almost all comprised in two notes, each of them about two hundred pages long. The one is on the subject of the penal laws, the other on Fox's historical work. In the former, the author proposes to abrogate the whole penal code, and replace it by a more mild and philosophical system, in a great measure declining the aid of capital punishment. The several species of crime are ingeniously discussed, with a view to the proof that some other form of punishment would better correct or avenge. In the miscellaneous discourse, put in the form of a note on the subject of Mr. Fox's work, there is a great deal of research into the ecclesiastical history of our country. Philopatris is the ardent friend of the principles of civil

liberty and of religious liberty—as far as concerns the Roman Catholics; but it seems there has of late years arisen a most pestilent set of fanatics, under the assumed name of *evangelical* Christians, the outcasts of reason, the disgrace of our country, and the danger of our Established Church. Well then, shall we persecute them, shall we coerce them? Oh, no! says he, I am the enthusiastic friend of freedom; we must only “by well-considered and well-applied regulations *restrain* them.” And this is all that has been learned from all the argument and eloquence of Fox! We have never so impressively felt the superiority of that great patriot’s mind, and the irreparable loss the nation has suffered in his removal, as since we have seen how little of his principles and of his illumination have been left among his professed friends and disciples. This most learned work, after soaring and glittering a length of eight hundred pages, ends in the completest bathos that ever learned performance merged in—it actually falls and splashes in praises of the “Barrister.”

EDUCATION IN RELATION TO RELIGION.

Essays on Professional Education. By R. L. EDGEWORTH, Esq., F.R.S., M.R.I.A., &c. 4to. 1810.

IN literary partnership with a female relative, this author has become sufficiently well known to the public, to enable it to prejudge with tolerable confidence the general qualities of any work he might write, especially on the subject of education. His book will be opened with the expectation of a very good share of valuable instruction, the result of a long and careful exercise of sound sense on the habits of society, on the experience of education, and on a great multitude of books. There will be no hope of convicting the author of enthusiasm for a system, or servility to any distinguished authority. It will be expected that good use will be made of the opinions of the most opposite speculatists, and that most of the opinions that are approved will be sup-

ported by some reference to experiments by which they have been verified. It will be expected that, while a philosophic manner and diction are avoided, and all speculations are constantly applied to a practical purpose, full advantage will yet be taken of those explanations which the laws of our nature have received from the best modern philosophers. The reader will reckon on finding it constantly maintained, that the influence of facts has fully as efficient an operation as instruction by words, in forming the human character; and he will not be surprised at a tone of somewhat more positive confidence than himself is happy enough to entertain, of the complete and necessary success of the process when it unites the proper facts and the proper instructions. As a moralist, it will perhaps raise no wonder if the author should be found so much a man of the world, as to admit various convenient compromises between the pure principles of virtue, and the customs and prejudices of society; and as to religion, no man will expect bigotry, or ascetic and incommensurable piety, or any sort of doctrinal theology. There will be an agreeable and confident expectation of a great number of pertinent anecdotes, supplied from history and fiction, at once to relieve and illustrate the reasonings. The reader will be prepared to accept this mode of infusing a vivacity and instructive force into the composition, instead of brilliance of imagination; comprehensive knowledge instead of argumentative subtlety; and perspicuity of language instead of elegance.

The first essay, or chapter, proposes principles and plans for those stages of education, which, preceding the direct training for a particular profession, admit of a discipline in many points common to the children destined to all the professions. And yet, as parents are urged to fix at a very early period the future profession of each of their sons, they are properly recommended to introduce at an early stage of this general discipline a specific modification of it, prospective to the profession selected. In advising parents to this early choice, the author explodes, in a great measure, the popular notion of a natural inherent determination towards some one pursuit more than another, commonly called "peculiar genius," "impulse of genius," "bent of mind," "natural turn," &c. In attacking this notion, he calls in the power-

ful aid of Johnson, who always manifested an extreme antipathy to it. "I hate," said he, "to hear people ask children whether they will be bishops, or chancellors, or generals, or what profession their genius leads them to: do not they know, that a boy of seven years old has a genius for nothing but spinning a top and eating apple-pie?" Mr. Edgeworth condemns the folly of waiting in expectation that the supposed natural genius will disclose itself, or be drawn forth by some accident; during all which time the general discipline of education will probably be very remiss, the specific training preparatory to professional studies will be systematically avoided, and the youth is either growing up to be fit for nothing, or is perhaps determined at last by a casual event, or unfortunate acquaintance, to the very worst selection that he could have made in the whole catalogue of employments. It is insisted, that methods which will generally prove effectual, may be adopted by parents, to give the child a preference for any department of learning or action they choose, and to make him sedulous to acquire the requisite qualifications. The author notices some of the most remarkable instances recorded of persons being determined by a particular accident to the pursuits in which they afterwards excelled; as Cowley's passion for poetry originated from his meeting with the "Fairy Queen" in his mother's window; and Sir Joshua Reynolds's for painting, from his chancing to open a book by Richardson, on that subject, at a friend's house. Mr. Edgeworth observes, that the effect produced by reading these books would not have been less if they had been laid in the way by design; and that, besides, when an impression is to be made by design, the effect is not left to depend on a single impression, since by a judicious management the child may be subjected to a combination and a series of impressions all tending to the same point. The manner of conducting this process is sketched with a great deal of knowledge and judgment in these Essays. If the magnitude and certainty of the effect to be thus produced are assumed in terms rather too little qualified, it is an error on the right side; since it will invigorate the motive by which parents and friends are to be prompted to design and perseverance, and since nothing can be practically more mischievous, than the fancy that all is to be done by some

innate predisposition and adaptation, aided by fortuitous occurrences. At the same time, our author does not need to be reminded, that, as a thousand boys of the same ages as Cowley and Reynolds might have met with, and partly read, the "Fairy Queen," and the book on painting, without receiving from them any strong determination to poetry or painting; so, from the same cause,—the same intrinsic mental difference, whatever be the ultimate principle of that difference,—the proposed discipline of multiplied and successive impressions, passing just an equal length of time on a thousand youthful minds, will eventually leave, notwithstanding, all imaginable varieties in their dispositions and qualifications.* Nevertheless, there will be many more heroes, or orators, or engineers, than if no such process had been employed; and those who fail to become heroic, or eloquent, or scientific, will yet be less absolutely the reverse of those characters, than they would otherwise have been. Our author touches but briefly on the nature of that undeniable original distinction which constitutes what is denominated *genius*; and maintains, very reasonably, that whatever might have been the nature, the cause, or the amount, of the inherent original difference between such men as Newton, Milton, and Locke, and ordinary men, that original difference was probably far less than the actual difference after the full effect of impressions, cultivation, and exertion. He suggests some very useful cautions to parents, against treating their children according to the mysterious and invidious distinction of "genius" and "no genius."

The defects and the cultivation of memory are shortly noticed; and it is maintained, that any memory may be so disciplined, as to be quite competent to the most important matters of business and science. In proof of this, and as a lesson on the best mode of cultivation, the example of Le Sage, the philosopher of Geneva, is introduced, and would have been very instructive if his method of retaining his knowledge by connecting it with a set of general principles (a sort of corks to keep it in buoyancy), had been more precisely explained by means of two or three exemplifications. There are some very useful observations on the several relations of ideas which are the instruments of recollection; as resemblance, contrariety, contiguity, and cause and effect;

it is strongly and justly insisted, that the memory which operates most by means of the last of these relations is by far the most useful, and therefore that the best mode of cultivating it is a severe attention to this relation.

Mr. Edgeworth censures, but not in illiberal language, the system which prevails in our public schools, and our colleges, in which so disproportionate a measure of time is devoted to classical studies, and in the former of which the course of instruction is the same for all the youth, though they are intended for all the different professions. He advises not to force any violent reforms on these ancient institutions, but to induce their gradual and voluntary amelioration, or, if that be possible, to superannuate them, by means of new though smaller seminaries, in which a much greater share of attention shall be given to science, to studies of direct moral and political utility, and to the peculiar preparation for professions. He adverts to the system of education adopted by the Jesuits; and the plans devised by Frederic "the Great," as he is here designated; and reviews at some length the succession of magnificent schemes projected by the French philosophers before and in the course of the Revolution. Some of these schemes were practically attempted, and they failed, partly from being on too vast a scale, and beginning with too high a species of instruction, and partly from that state of national tumult which withdrew both the attention and the pecuniary support indispensable to these great undertakings. At length, a party of philosophers obtained the complete establishment of a more limited, but as far it extends, more effective institution, under the denomination of Ecole Polytechnique. In the general course of education in France, however, our author observes, classical literature has of late years been regarded with such indifference or contempt, as to have threatened a depravation of taste and of language; the studies of the youth having been directed with incomparably the most emulation and ardour to the branches of knowledge related or capable of being applied to the art of war. He relates how the men of science rose to the highest importance at the very period at which it might have been previously imagined they must have sunk into utter obscurity in the hour of revolutionary violence and terror.

Our author's scheme for the formation of an improved order of elementary and superior schools in this country, is laid down with much good sense, and without visionary extravagance, particularly without the extravagance of expecting any assistance from the legislature. He would create and support them simply by the conviction, in the minds of parents in each town and village, of the usefulness and even necessity of such a mode of instruction as he advises; a mode which should include, without any ostentation, an attention to more branches of knowledge than are usually acquired in schools. Or, if it were desirable there should be any expedient more formal, for promoting such schools, than merely the wish of parents to obtain such instruction, he recommends there should be an association of gentlemen in London to patronize their formation in any part of the country to which they can extend their influence and aid. But the only efficacious power to create competent seminaries, is the concurrent will of a tolerable proportion of the parents, in any place, to have their children instructed in the rational manner proposed.

The second essay is on Clerical Education. Considering the expensiveness of a residence at college, and the very inadequate salaries of curates, the author dissuades parents who have not such connexions as may assist their son's success in the church, from choosing this profession for him; unless they have fortune sufficient to contribute to his support for perhaps many years after his entrance on it, or he has already acquired a very strong determination of mind towards it, accompanied by such proofs of application and unusual talent as may warrant a presumption that he will make his way through all difficulties by the force of conspicuous merit. By *making his way*, is meant, of course, his attaining the emoluments and honours of the church; and it is obvious enough, that a young man who has no means of doing this but his personal qualities and conduct, has little ground for such a presumption, when it is considered how much the disposal of the ecclesiastical good things is regulated by parliamentary interest, and the favour of persons of rank. The parliamentary interest confessedly so powerful in making dignitaries and rich incumbents, our author decides to be partly beneficial and partly injurious to the church and to national morality.

"That which is exerted by rich commoners or noble families to obtain livings for men of learning and virtue who have been tutors to their children, is highly advantageous ; it insures good education to our young nobility, and it encourages men of learning and talents in the middle or lower orders of life to instruct themselves and become fit for such employments, and worthy of such rewards. Parliamentary interest, influencing the distribution of clerical honours and emoluments, is also beneficial, as it tempts parents of good families and fortunes to educate younger sons for the church : they give, as it were, a family pledge for the good conduct of their children, who at the same time may, by their manners and rank, raise the whole profession in the esteem and respect of the public. Church benefices may thus be considered as a fund for the provision of the younger sons of our gentry and nobles ; and in this point of view it cannot surely be a matter of complaint to any of the higher and middle classes of the community that the clergy enjoy a large portion of the riches of the state."—P. 59.

No reader, it is presumed, can permit himself for one moment to doubt whether all these arrangements can fail to keep in view, as their grand object, the promotion of primitive Christianity among the people, or to prove the best possible means of teaching and exemplifying it ; whether the men from the inferior classes, thus seeking and attaining the preferments of the church through the medium of tutorships in noble families, be secure against all possibility of becoming sycophants in the course of their progress, and political tools at its conclusion ; or whether zealous piety, and a dereliction of the spirit and fashions of the world, be the *necessary* inheritance of the younger sons of the nobility and gentry. On these points there can be no doubt ; and therefore it is clear that thus far the parliamentary interest in question is highly beneficial to the Christian cause. But the subject has a dark side as well as a bright one ; and every reader will be at once grieved and astonished on reading the next paragraph, in which our author says, in so many words : "But parliamentary interest is not always employed in this manner ; it is sometimes exerted to obtain livings for the mean hanger-on of one lord, or the drinking, or the profligate companion of another." These are *litera-tim* the words, as they stand in the book before us ; but how is it possible they can be true ? How is it possible that any

bishop will suffer such a man to declare before him that he is moved by the Holy Ghost to enter the sacred function? Or, if it is after his entrance into the church that he becomes such a character, how is it possible an institution framed purely in aid of Christianity should fail to have the most peremptory regulations, not only for interdicting such a man from preferment to larger emoluments and more extensive cure of souls, but for expelling him from the ministry altogether?

If parents have resolved to devote a son to the church, a judicious education will, according to the essayist, infallibly make him a person to do honour to the sacred vocation. In order to determine the right method of education for this specific purpose, our author delineates at length the required character, in the successive official stages of curate, rector, and prelate. He informs us that "a good curate is not the man who boasts of being the boon companion of the jolly squire, who is seen following him and his hounds at full cry, leaping five-barred gates, the admiration of the hallooing heroes of the chase, or floundering in the mud, their sport and derision: he is not the man set officially, at the foot of his patron's table, "to smack his wine and rule his roast;" he neither drinks nor swears; he scorns to become the buffoon, and never can become the butt of the company. Indeed, he does not feel it absolutely necessary to be continually in company." The character which our author proposes to create, is extremely amiable in all the situations and offices in which it is represented. The reader will be prepared not to expect any very strong emphasis to be laid on religion, in the strict sense of the word; he may supply that desideratum from his own mind, to a sketch of exemplary prudence, dignity, kindness to the poor and sick, diligence, propriety in the performance of the public offices of the church, and moderation on advancement to superior station. There seems a material omission in the description of a good rector. After the melancholy picture given of the misery and degradation suffered by many curates from extreme poverty, we confidently expected to find it made an essential point in the good character of the rector, never to suffer his curate to be in this situation from the parsimony of the stipend. As the legislature has declined to interfere

in this concern, it lies with the holders of livings to give their curates that complacency in their office which accompanies a respectable competence, or to gall them with the mortification, impatience, and disgust inflicted by a long, toilsome, and hunger-bitten apprenticeship to some better station, towards which they will be continually looking with a loathing and abhorrence of the present condition, and which they will be tempted to practise the grossest servility in order to obtain. What must be the natural effect on the state of the church, of perhaps several thousands of its ministers having their characters and exertions subjected for many years, if not for life, to the operation of such feelings as these? And what are all the gentlemanly qualities of a rector worth, if he can be content to see a fellow-clergyman and his family half starving on the five per cent. which the said rector affords him from his ecclesiastical income, for taking the work of the parish off his hands?

Having exhibited the model of excellence in the different clerical ranks, in all of which he says it is the very same character that is required, and the highest of which none should attain without having commenced with the lowest, the writer proceeds to the proper training for making the good curate, rector, and bishop. And the plan includes something extremely specific and peculiar, for it proceeds on the principle that "the virtues of a clergyman should be founded on religion;" a foundation which we cannot, from this work, ascertain to be necessary to the virtue of other professional characters, or necessary to man in general as a moral agent. We are not distinctly informed whether religion, that is of course Christianity, is to be considered as any thing more than a convenient basis for a profession, with its appropriate set of peculiar decorums; or whether it is really a system of truth communicated by divine revelation. Nor are we taught to comprehend how, if Christianity is to be regarded as such a system, education in general, and education for the other particular professions, can be safely and innocently conducted under the exclusion of this divine system of doctrine and moral principles; and not only an exclusion, but in some of the departments of education, a most pointed and acknowledged opposition. Possibly the light in which the subject is regarded is this,—that it is a

very trifling question whether Christianity be true or false; but that it teaches some principles and modes of action, the prevalence of which, to a certain extent, would be useful in society, and therefore it is desirable they should be inculcated; while, on the other hand, the condition of society requires the prevalence also, to a certain extent, of directly opposite principles, and therefore the same regard to utility requires that other professions should support, and be supported by, those opposite principles. With entire gravity, our author takes quite the Christian ground, in settling the moral principles of the youth destined to the church. It is while deciding whether his education should be in a great measure private or at a public school.

The private education recommended is not to be a reclusive education: the youth is to see the friends and acquaintance of the family, and mix in general conversation. He is to be led gradually, and not with too much haste, into a comprehension of the principal truths,—perhaps we should rather say, propositions or notions,—of religion, and into a firm faith in them, founded on the “broad basis of evidence.” A devotional taste is to be created by “letting a child have opportunities of observing the sublime and beautiful appearances of nature, the rising and the setting sun, the storm of winter, and the opening flowers of spring,” to all which, however, compared with the “top and apple pie,” most children will probably manifest the utmost indifference. The impressions are to be reinforced by Mrs. Barbauld’s beautiful hymns, by good descriptions of the striking objects in nature, and by good church music. The most simple and affecting narrative parts of the Bible are to be added as soon as they can be clearly understood; but the author strongly disapproves of children at an early age being set to read the Bible at large, when a great portion of it must be unintelligible to them, when the irksomeness of having it for a sort of task-book, and the carelessness resulting from constant familiarity with it, may predispose the pupil to regard it with dislike, and disqualify him for feeling the full impression of its sanctity and grandeur in subsequent life. Instructors are admonished to be cautious of giving the child erroneous and mean ideas of the Divine Being by minute illustrations or trivial and deceptive analogies; of

habitually threatening his vengeance on their faults, in the form either of immediate judgments or future retribution; and of describing the future state with the particularity which must divest the idea of all its sublimity. Considering it as impossible, by the nature of the youthful mind, that very young children can be effectually governed by ideas of a remote futurity, our author advises not to make use of these ideas in governing them, "till reiterated experience shall have given them the habit of believing that what was future has become present." With regard to attempting to connect, in the minds of the children, ideas of the divine anger, and the punishments of a future state, with their faults and vices, we think there are pious parents and teachers that need some admonition. To resort, with a promptitude which has at least the effect of profaneness, to these awful ideas, on every recurrence of carelessness or perversity, is the way both to bring those ideas into contempt, and to make all faults appear equal. It is also obvious, that, by trying this expedient on all occasions, parents will bring their authority into contempt. If they would not have that authority set at defiance, they must be able to point to immediate consequences, within their power to inflict on delinquency. Perhaps one of the most prudential rules respecting the enforcement on the minds of children of the conviction that they are accountable to an all-seeing though unseen Governor, and liable to the punishment of obstinate guilt in a future state, is, to take opportunities of impressing this idea the most cogently, at seasons when the children are not lying under any blame or displeasure, at moments of serious kindness on the part of the parents, and serious inquisitiveness on the part of the children, leaving in some degree the conviction to have its own effect, greater or less, in each particular instance of guilt, according to the greater or less degree of aggravation which the child's own conscience can be made secretly to acknowledge in that guilt. And another obvious rule will be, that when he is to be solemnly reminded of these religious sanctions, and is in immediate connexion with an actual instance of inality in his conduct, the instance should be one of the most serious of his faults, that will bear the utmost seriousness of such an admonition. As to how early in life this

doctrine may be communicated, there needs no more precise rule than this; that it may be as early as well-instructed children are found to show any signs of prolonged or returning inquisitiveness concerning the supreme *Cause* of all that they behold, and concerning what becomes of persons known to them in their neighbourhood, whom they find passing, one after another, through the change called death, about which their curiosity will not be at all satisfied by merely learning its name. These inquiries will often begin to interest them, and therefore these doctrines and sanctions of religion may be beneficially introduced into their minds, sooner a great deal than our author seems willing they should hear any thing about God as a Judge, or a future state of retribution. Besides, we do not know what the economy may be at Edgeworth's Town, but in a family where there is any avowed attention to religion, where the children are made acquainted with even only select portions of the Scriptures, where there are any visible acts of devotion, and where it is a practice to attend public worship, it is quite impossible to *prevent* them from acquiring the ideas in question in *some* form; and, therefore, unless parents will adopt systematically, and maintain with the most vigilant care, the practical habits of atheists, in order to keep the children's minds clear of these ideas, there is an absolute necessity of presenting these ideas in a correct though inadequate form as early as possible to the mind, to prevent their being fixed there in a form that shall be absurd and injurious.

The Essay proceeds to indicate the practical discipline for cultivating, or rather creating, the virtues of economy, charity, tolerance, and firmness of mind. Here we meet with one of the many instances of compromise between absolute principle and convenience.

In making the difference between education for different professions, we may observe that a clergyman's should essentially differ from a lawyer's in one respect. A boy intended for the bar may be, in some degree, indulged in that pertinacious temper, which glories in supporting an opinion by all the arguments that can be adduced in its favour; but a boy designed for the church should never be encouraged to argue for victory; he should never be applauded for pleading his cause well, for sup-

porting his own opinion, or for decrying or exposing to ridicule that of his opponent."—P. 88.

It seems quite a settled principle of our author's morality, thus to make the character of the *man* not only secondary to the professional character, but a sacrifice to it. Nor can we know where the operation of this principle is to be limited, nor whether it has any limits. If, as in the case before us, the love of truth, and, by infallible consequence, the practical love of justice may thus be exploded, by a formal sanction to the love of victory, and to a pertinacity regardless of right and wrong, for the sake of producing professional expertness—what other virtue should we hesitate to sacrifice to the same object? Thus explicitly tolerate and encourage in the pupil the contempt of one essential part of moral rectitude, and he may very justly laugh at his parents and tutors, when they are gravely enjoining him not to violate any of the rest. He may tell them he apprehends it may be of service in prosecuting some of his designs to throw aside one or two more of the articles commonly put by moralists among the essentials of virtue, and, that therefore, if they please, he had rather be excused listening to any canting lectures about integrity. And if the pure laws of moral excellence are to be deposed from their authority at all, we presume the benefit of the exemption ought not to be confined to the persons intended to figure at the bar. Some other employments, to which the bar professes to be in deadly hostility, have also their pupils and their adepts, to whom the abrogation of the rigid standard of morality will be exceedingly welcome and convenient; and more *professions* than these Essays extend to, might have been treated of in a book, much to the edification of many acute and active young persons who are at all times training to them. Let it be also considered in what a ludicrous predicament the theory of morals would be placed in a family in which there were several sons, educating for different professions, under the immediate care of their parents; a case which our author regards as very desirable. One son, let it be supposed, is to be a lawyer, another a clergyman. The young clergyman receives in the sight and hearing of his brother, daily lessons on the indispensable duty of maintaining an ardent love of truth and an honest, candid simplicity that admits every

argument in its proper force, and would feel it a violation of principle—not of reason or decorum only, but of conscientious principle—to defend error through obstinacy or the desire of victory. But the very spirit and conduct which the young clergyman is taught to regard as immoral, is by the same instructors, on the same day, in the same room, encouraged in the young lawyer by a tolerance, which, if he acquits himself cleverly, will approach to applause. What are these virtuous instructors to do, or say, when the young lawyer laughs aloud at his brother while undergoing their moral lecture, and at them for making it; or when their clerical pupil asks them, with ingenuous distress, what they really mean by the terms duty, morality, virtuous principle, and the like, seeing the pretended moral principle and its direct reverse are thus to be regarded as equally right? We can conceive no expedient for these worthy parents to adopt in such a case, but to dismiss at once the hypocrisy of an illusory diction, and frankly avow, that, as to the point of virtue and matter of conscience involved in the honesty enjoined on the clergyman, that is all a joke; but that the plain thing is, there is a *professional propriety* in the clergyman's cultivating the quality in question, and a *professional convenience* in the lawyer's desisting it.

The remainder of the essay briefly traces, without effecting any novelty of system, the proper course of a young clergyman's studies, previously to his going to college, at college, and in his subsequent years. The French and English modes of eloquence are contrasted, and the latter, for very good reasons, preferred. There are some plain and useful suggestions of methods of discipline, by which the preacher should accomplish himself as a good speaker. He is advised to study the pulpit manners of living preachers, not for so poor and absurd an object as the imitation of even the best of them, but to perfect his abstract idea of excellence by means of a consideration of various examples, better and worse,—for he recommends the student to hear some of the worst specimens as well as the best. Among the vilest sort, he says, "should be classed all those clerical coxcombs, who show that they are more intent on the nice management of a cambric handkerchief, or the display of

a brilliant ring on their white hands, than upon the truths of the gospel, or the salvation of their auditors.

He concludes by recommending the clergyman to acquaint himself accurately with the various modes of faith, worship, and religious establishment, in our own and other countries, in order to keep himself clear of bigotry and party violence, and to become qualified to act the part of a wise and benevolent moderator among others.

On taking leave of the clerical profession, the author appears to take a final and willing leave of religion. The word is admitted, indeed, two or three times, in enumerating the requisite instructions for the other professions; it is introduced just as a notice that the subject has been duly disposed of already; and the writer appears glad to be thus left at full liberty to sketch the whole scheme of the education of the soldier, physician, lawyer, and statesman, without formally including this ungracious article. Such a thing as a solemn regard to the Governor of the world, and a rigorous adherence to his revealed laws, was deemed too trifling or too fanatical to be brought forward in each of the delineations of professional excellence, as a purifier of motives, as a prescriber of ends, and a regulator in the choice of means in every department of human action. It was not that the author was anxious to avoid repetition; for most of the other requisite branches of instruction and qualities of character which have been illustrated and enforced as indispensable or highly useful for one profession, are again fully insisted on with reference to another, and still another. Nor do we complain of this repetition. The value of what may be called a philosophical *man*, of a most carefully cultivated reasoning faculty, of a sound and moral self-command, of a certain portion of history and science, and of extensive knowledge of mankind, is obviously so great to all persons employed in important concerns, that the reader is willing and pleased to have them brought again in view, in order to its being shown in *what manner* they are indispensable in the education of the physician, or the lawyer, or the statesman. But while such ample liberty is taken of enlarging again, in the successive divisions of the work, on several qualifications which are not merely professional, but are indispensable to professional men, just

because they are indispensable to all enlightened and useful men, we own we cannot help receiving an unfavourable impression of the moral quality of a work, from seeing so careful an omission (except in the part where it was unavoidably to be noticed as professionally necessary) of that one qualification of human character, which is the only secure basis of any virtue, and gives the purest lustre to every talent.

The third essay is on Military and Naval Education? In undertaking to sketch the proper education for the several professions, Mr. Edgeworth has omitted, apparently by design, to premise any observations tending to fix the moral estimate of each, for the assistance of those persons who are compelled to consult a delicate conscience in choosing the professions of their children. A few observations of this kind might not have been out of place, at the beginning of an essay on the method of making a soldier; for such a conscience may perversely raise a very strong question, whether it be *right* to destine a child to the occupation of slaying men; and, happily, for our country (or unhappily, as we believe it will be more according to the current moral principles of the times to say), there are a certain proportion of people who cannot dismiss in practice their convictions of right, even though flattered by a presumption that their names, in their sons, might attain the splendour of military fame. We cannot be unaware how much offence there are persons capable of taking, at a plain description of war in the terms expressive of its chief operation. And it is, to be sure, very hard that what has been bedizened with the most magnificent epithets of every language, what has procured for so many men the idolatry of the world, what has crowned them with royal, imperial, and, according to the usual slang on the subject, "immortal" honours, what has obtained their apotheosis in history and poetry,—it is hard and vexatious that this same adored maker of emperors and demi-gods, should be reducible in literal truth of description to "the occupation of slaying men," and should therefore hold its honours at the mercy of the first gleam of sober sense that shall break upon mankind. But, however whimsical it may appear to recollect that the great business of war is slaughter, however deplorably low-minded it may

appear to regard all the splendour of fame with which war has been blazoned, much in the same light as the gilding of that hideous idol to which the Mexicans sacrificed their human hecatombs, however foolish it may be thought to make a difficulty of consenting to merge the eternal laws of morality in the policy of states, and however presumptuous it may seem to condemn so many privileged, and eloquent, and learned, and reverend personages, as any and every war is sure to find its advocates,—it remains an obstinate fact, that there are some men of such perverted perceptions as to apprehend that revenge, rage, and cruelty, blood and fire, wounds, shrieks, groans, and death, with an infinite accompaniment of collateral crimes and miseries, are the elements of what so many besotted mortals have worshipped in every age under the title of “glorious war.” To be told that this is just the commonplace with which dull and envious moralists have always railed against martial glory, will not in the slightest degree modify their apprehension of a plain matter of fact. What signifies it whether moralists are dull, envious, and dealers in commonplace, or not? No matter who says it, nor from what motive; the fact is, that war consists of the components here enumerated, and is therefore an infernal abomination, when maintained for any object, and according to any measures, not honestly within the absolute necessities of defence. In these justifying necessities, we include the peril to which another nation with perfect innocence on its part may be exposed, from the injustice of a third power; as in the instance of the Dutch people, saved by Elizabeth from being destroyed by Spain. Now it needs not be said that wars, justifiable, on *either* side; on the pure principles of lawful defence, are the rarest things in history. Whole centuries, all over darkened with the horrors of war, may be explored from beginning to end, without perhaps finding two instances in which any one belligerent power can be pronounced to have adopted every precaution, and made every effort, concession, and sacrifice required by Christian morality, in order to avoid war; to have entered into it with extreme reluctance; to have entertained while prosecuting it, an ardent desire for peace, promptly seizing every occasion and expedient of conciliation; to have sincerely forsworn all ambitious objects.

to have spurned the foolish pride of not being the first to offer peace, and to have ended the war the very first hour that it was found that candid negotiation and moderate terms, would be acceded to by the enemy. It is certain, at least, that the military history of this country is not the record where such examples are to be sought. But it may be presumed, we suppose, that those parents whose moral principles are to be of any use to their children, will abhor the idea to their sons being employed in any war that has not the grounds of justification here enumerated. But then, in order to their feeling themselves warranted to educate those sons for the business of war, they must have a firm assurance that the moral principles of their nation, or its government, are about to become so transformed, that there shall be, during the lives of their children, no war which shall not, on the part of their country, stand within the justifying conditions that we have specified. And let a conscientious parent seriously reflect, whether there be any good cause for entertaining such an assurance. But, unless he has such an assurance, he gives his son to be shaped and finished, like a sword or a bayonet in a Birmingham manufactory, to be employed in deeds of slaughter, righteous or iniquitous, just as may be determined by the persons in power, to whom he must sell his services unconditionally, and whose determinations may probably enough be guided by the most depraved principles; while there is this unfortunate difference between the youth and the sword, that the youth who is thus becoming an instrument of slaughter, cannot still be divested of the accountableness of a moral agent. A melancholy case! that the father should have cause to deplore the impossibility of his son's being at once an accomplished soldier and an idiot. If a time shall come when the nation and its government shall manifest, with any thing like a sufficient security for permanently manifesting, half as much moderation as they have shown pride and ambition, and half as decided an attachment to peace as they have shown violent passion for war, during the last half-century, then the parent's conscientious scruples may be turned from the general question of the morality of the military employment, to the particular considerations of its probable influence on his son's character, and its dangers to his life;

that is to say, if all such considerations, and the profession itself, are not by that time set aside by the final cessation of war. In the mean time, conscientious parents may do well to resign the ambition of training sons to martial glory, to those fathers—a plentiful complement—who will laugh at the sickly conscience which scruples to devote a youth to the profession of war, on the ground that the wars in which he shall be employed may be iniquitous.

We are not sure that Mr. Edgeworth would not join in this laugh, as he makes very light of whatever morality has to do in the concern. He contemplates with the utmost coolness, not only the possibility that his young hero may be employed in an unjust cause (in which case he is here recommended to take no responsibility on his conscience, but mind his proper business of killing and slaying), but the certainty that the prescribed education for a military life will powerfully tend to promote and perpetuate a state of war. He says,—

“After quitting his academy, it is scarcely possible that a young man, who has acquired all the knowledge, and caught all the enthusiasm necessary for his profession, should not ardently wish for war, that he may have opportunities of distinguishing himself. Martial enthusiasm and a humane philosophical love of peace are incompatible; therefore, military pupils should not be made philosophers, or they cease to be soldiers, and how then can we expect to be defended.”—P. 194.

Thus it is plainly asserted, that a rightly conducted military education will inspire its subjects with an ardent passion against the nation's being at peace. Now let it be considered, that of the numerous youths to be thus educated, and therefore inspired with this passion, a considerable proportion will be sons of the nobility, who form a branch of the legislature, a kind of permanent council to the king; that another large proportion are from the families of the prodigious number of executive functionaries of the state, through all their gradations; and that a very numerous supply is from the families of wealth and influence throughout the country, whose direct or collateral relations have seats in the House of Commons: let all this be reflected on but five minutes; let it be considered that the younger sons

of the nobility, when thus educated, must be provided for at all events, even if they were *not* burning for martial enterprise; that in the descending ranks of family and wealth, who send their representatives to the House of Commons, the modern habits of living have created certain necessities very powerfully tending to influence the fathers of these young heroes to promote in that house, in person, or by their friends, such national schemes as will furnish employment for their sons; and that the generous ambition, as it will be called, of these high-spirited young men, always therefore the favourites and idols of their families and connexions, will probably have no little direct influence on the volitions of their parliamentary relatives. Let any man think of all this influence, acting in reinforcement of that horror of peace which may prevail as much in the government and a great part of the nation another half century, as it has prevailed during the last, and say whether there can be any better security for a constant national disposition to a state of war. The nation is to stand, therefore, in this desirable predicament; that the grand expedient for defending it against enemies, is to be most exactly calculated to set it continually on finding and making enemies.

Such are the natural effects of our author's scheme of military education, according to his own statement of its tendency, on which statement he appears not to have the slightest idea that any one can be so wrong-headed as to found an objection to such an education. It is no business of ours, in this place, to enter into a dull and useless discussion whether it be practicable to devise a scheme of education which should qualify young men to be efficient soldiers, whenever duty should appear to summon them to act in that capacity, and should equally, at the same time, cultivate all the moral principles that would inspire a detestation of war. But it is our business, as Christian censors and monitor to say, that, if this is not practicable, no parent can educate his son for war, without a complete virtual abjuration of Christianity; as it is obviously impossible for him at once to be faithful to the laws of an institution which commands every thing gentle, pacific, preventive of strife and suffering, and repressive of ambition, and deliberately to excite in his son an ardent passion for that employment, of which the grand elements are fury, anguish, and destruction. The laws of

this institution are fundamental and absolute, forming the primary obligation on all its believers, and reducing all other rules of action to find their place, as they can, in due subordination,—or to find no place at all. No arguments in favour of this military passion are to be allowed from such topics as *national glory*, unless it is to be maintained, that Christianity has provided for a suspension of its own principles, in favour of that pride and ambition generally implied in this phrase. And if it has made an exception in favour of these, why should it not be equally indulgent to any other depraved feelings connected with other kinds of corrupt interest? that is, why has it an existence as a moral authority? It had better not exist at all, if it were an institution which enforced gentleness and quietness on mankind, just as if to give the more destructive effect to an exception sanctioning martial madness to harass and consume them. Truly it would deserve all the contempt which such persons as our author feel for it, if it were a system maintaining itself rigidly obligatory on those whose refined moral sensibility yields to admit the obligation, but not obligatory on those whose fierce passions disdain its control; that is, a thing of which the obligation depends on whether men are willing to acknowledge it or not.

We have mentioned what is called *national glory*, as this is one of the chief idols which men of war are always required to worship, and to which there is hardly anything in the whole moral system which they will not be justified, by the generality of politicians and moralists in these times, for sacrificing. But national defence is Mr. Edgeworth's immediate plea, in justification of a mode of training which must deprave the moral sentiments of a considerable portion of our youth: "How can we otherwise," he asks, "expect to be defended?" We have already said, in reply to this, How can we, at this rate, be ever free from perils, created by our own foolish disposition to seize or make occasions for war? But we add another question of still graver import,—On the supposition that there is a righteous Governor of the world, how can we expect to be defended, if we industriously promote, in the minds of a large and the most active proportion of our youth, a spirit which he abominates, and the national conduct naturally resulting from which he has threatened to visit with punishment?

This question, indeed, it must be acknowledged, can pertinently be addressed only to the "fanatics;" as we have had extensive opportunity of observing, that the persons so reputed alone show any real practical recognition of a divine government in speculating on the policy of states. It is to be hoped that all these fanatics will, in consistency with their faith in such a government, beware of soliciting the demon of martial ambition into the minds of their sons; convinced that no possible combination of circumstances under heaven can sanctify a spirit the reverse of their religion, and that, as a general law, a state in danger, has just so much the greater cause to despair of being defended, as it prepares its defence in a spirit careless of divine injunctions, and scornful of a reliance on Providence. Till the right spirit shall find its way into nations and governments, it remains to be seen what that Providence will suffer to be effected among them by that valorous ambition which Mr. Edgeworth wishes to inflame, and all the glory of which—except its success, and its efficacy to annihilate national danger—has richly crowned this country during the last half-century.

If the question were still urged, But how can a nation be defended? it may be answered at once, that a nation whose piety and justice are approved by heaven (and how is a nation of an opposite character to have any security of being defended, whatever be its ostensible means?) such a nation may be defended by the divine agency giving efficacy to the operation of such numbers, such military apparatus, and such resources of science, as the purely defensive spirit would always keep partly prepared, and would soon make ready for action, in an enlightened nation, conscious of having the most valuable possessions to lose.

Our author's morality appears on the same level, in the doctrine that it is not for military men, except those of the very highest rank, to form any judgment of their own on the right or wrong of the cause in which they are to be employed. That is, in the one employment which is the most awful on earth, that of inflicting death on human beings in the mass, men are not to consider their actions as of consequence enough for the cognizance of conscience; they may divest themselves of the inconvenience of moral

accountableness, till they return to the solemn functions of buying and selling, and the ordinary proprieties of life. In the civil economy of society, the life of an individual is regarded as of such importance, that it must not be touched without a most grave and punctilious process; witnesses are attested and rigorously examined, juries are sworn and charged, laws are explained, learned judges preside, and are even allowed by their office to assume in a certain degree the character of advocates for the accused; and should any one of all these persons concerned, be proved to have acted in the process as a man divested of moral responsibility, his character is blasted for ever. But let an ambitious despot, or a profligate ministry, only give out the word that we must be at war with this or the other nation,—and then a man who has no personal complaint against any living thing of that nation, who may not be certain that it has committed any real injury against his own nation or government, nay, who possibly may be convinced by facts against which he cannot shut his eyes, that his own nation or government is substantially in the wrong, then this man, under the sanction of the word *war*, may, with a conscience entirely unconcerned, immediately go and cut down human beings as he would cut down a copse. It is nothing to him if the people he is to co-operate in attacking are peaceful, free, and happy, and that this very freedom and happiness may have been the cause of the war, by exciting the malignity of the aggressor. The peaceful valleys and hills of Switzerland can be no more sacred in his view, than the borders of the most arrogant and malicious rival. The officers who invaded and subdued that country were, all but the commander-in-chief, as virtuously employed as those who fell in attempting to defend it. And, admitting that the popular resistance in Spain is really an effort of a long-degraded people to obtain liberty, the invaders, excepting perhaps the marshal-dukes, are as honourably occupied as their opponents; for they are destroying men and desolating the country, under the modest forbearance, enjoined by our moralist, to arrogate to themselves a right of judging of the merits of the cause. And should they receive orders from their superiors to perpetrate the barbarities of Herod, they have only to obey, and exult in their exemption from moral

responsibility. The exemption goes this length, and every length, or it cannot be proved to exist at all; for if an accountableness is to take place at some point, and the man's own judgment is to decide where, he will be compelled to begin his examination, and therefore to acknowledge his accountableness, at the very first moral question that can be put concerning his employment.

The young soldier from Mr. Edgeworth's school is not to be eagerly set on duelling, but neither is he in all cases to decline that honourable practice. "The best character," he says, "a young man can establish on going into the army, is that of being determined to fight in a proper cause, but averse to quarrel for trifles." He strongly recommends fencing as a part of an officer's education.

"It might again revive the custom among gentlemen, of fighting duels with swords instead of pistols: a custom, which would at least diminish the number of duellists, by confining them to a certain class in society. Gentlemen would then be in some measure protected from the insolence of uneducated tenacity, and every ill-bred upstart would not find himself upon a footing with his superior because he can fire a pistol, or dares to stand a shot. If any distinction of ranks is to be supported, if any idea of subordination is to be maintained in a country, and what nation can exist without these, education must mark the boundaries, and maintain the privileges of the different orders. The honour and the life of an officer and a senator, and that of a mere idle man of the town, ought not to be put on the same level, nor should their differences be adjusted by one and the same appeal to the trigger."—P. 152.

This expedient for preserving so valuable a privilege to the better sort, for keeping duels a strictly genteel amusement, would prove ineffectual; for these "idle men of the town" would, in spite of their description, be soon stimulated to qualify themselves in the art, on which they found their equality with the "officers and senators" was to depend; and some of them, of the true bravo species, would soon acquire the power to overawe their pretended superiors. Mr. Edgeworth might know that some of these men of the town practise shooting at a mark, expressly in preparation for "affairs of honour," with as much assiduity as would finish them in the use of the sword. Under the

appearance of idle men of the town, there will always, in the metropolis, be a class of keen desperate adventurers by profession, who regard what Mr. Edgeworth may call "their superiors," as their *game*; and so long as gentlemen of the senatorian, or whatever other dignified sort, choose, in defiance of morality and law, to maintain the practice of "appeal" to either the "trigger" or the sword, they will deservedly be at the mercy of the more unerring pistols or swords of these formidable men. As to the supposed higher value of the "honour and the life of the officer or senator," surely the man is the best judge himself what the one or the other is worth; he is not *obliged* to appraise them in a pistolling match with "every ill-bred upstart, or idle man of the town," and, if he chooses to do it, it is of course because he judges they are things fit for such a traffic. And truly, whatever price they might have borne before, he cannot well estimate them too meanly by the time that he has measured his ground with his worthless antagonist, since community in crime is the grand equalizer in degradation. By the time he has consented to place himself in that situation, his "honour," at any rate, is hardly worth the trouble of a preference of one weapon to another, and his "life" is worth—mentioning in to-morrow's newspaper as a thing that went out in a gentlemanly style. In the name, then, of that liberty, so much favoured by the government and tribunals of this Christian country, of violating in this point morality and law, let not the man be forced to take the pains of learning an additional art in order to dispose of his couple of trifles, "honour and life," which can be disposed of with less trouble in the mode now in fashion.

The reader will be somewhat surprised to find that this determination to fight duels on all proper occasions, is to coalesce, in the young soldier's mind, with a *religion* which it shall be worth his while to maintain with an equal constancy of determination. We are not certain, even, whether the same weapons are not, in the last resort, to be employed; since "all interference with his religious sentiments, whether by ridicule or remonstrance," is represented as such "an infringement of his rights and his independence," as we should suppose he will be bound to resent with lead or steel.

"As a young officer will early mix with varieties of dissipated company, his religious principles should not trust for their defence to any of those outworks which wit can demolish; he should not be early taught to be scrupulous or strict in the observance of trifling forms; his important duties, and his belief in the essential tenets of his religion, should not rest upon these slight foundations, lest, if they be overthrown, the whole superstructure should fall. When his young companions perceive that he is not precise or punctilious, but sincere and firm in his belief; when they see that he avoids all controversy with others, and considers all interference with his own religious sentiments, whether by ridicule or remonstrance, as an infringement of his right and his independence, he will not only be left unmolested in his tenets, but he will command general respect. It is of the utmost importance that the early religious impressions made on the mind of a soldier should not be of a gloomy or dispiriting sort; they should be connected with hope, not with fear, or they will tend to make him cowardly instead of brave. Those who believe that they are secure of happiness hereafter if to the best of their power they live and die doing their duty, will certainly meet danger, and if necessary death, with more courage than they can ever do who are oppressed and intimidated by superstitious doubts and horrors, terrors which degrade man, and which are inconsistent with all ideas of the goodness and beneficence of God."—P. 143.

It should seem to be conveyed in this piece of instruction, that it is in some certain degree at the option of religious teachers *what* they shall inculcate as religion; and that, therefore, in their religious instructions to their military pupils, they can considerably accommodate to the purpose of producing bravery. We may also learn, that a religion which involves "terrors," needs not be believed by any of us, soldiers, authors, or critics, any testimony to the contrary in the Bible notwithstanding. As to the phrase, "if they live and die doing their duty," nothing can be more indefinite, or even equivocal; for, according to our author, a military man may die doing his duty though he dies in a duel, or, as far as we see, if he dies in the act of sacking a harmless town, which some atrocious tyrant, or tyrant's tool, has sworn to annihilate.

After so much more than enough on the moral complexion of this long essay on military education, there needs but very few words on its other qualities. In common with the

others, it has a certain defect, very sensibly felt by a reader of indifferent memory; that of not prominently marking the several stages and topics in the scheme. But this perhaps could not have been remedied by any other means than a formal division into a number of sections with distinct titles and arguments. The multifarious assemblage of precepts and illustrations includes, we should suppose, almost all the expedients most conducive to excite the spirit and finish the accomplishments of a soldier. Many directions are given for preparing the young hero from his infancy for the toils and privations of his future service.

The discipline of stripes must never be applied to him, of whatever perversity or mischief he may be guilty. Every thing must be done by an appeal to his pride, which passion is to be promoted and stimulated in every possible way, as the sovereign virtue of the military character; nor is any prescription given for transmuting it into the opposite Christian virtue just at the extreme moment when he is finally laying down his arms, if he should then be apprehensive that this military character may be an uncouth garb in which to appear in the other world. The proper discipline for creating courage is pointed out; amusements bearing some relation to the operation of war are suggested; it is advised that the boy be induced to employ himself sometimes in familiar practical mechanics; be early made master of the terms and elements of mathematics; be carefully trained to an accurate use of his eyes, in order to judge of distances and relative magnitudes; be taught drawing; learn some of the modern languages, but not expend much of his time on Latin and Greek. He is to be made conversant with the lives of warriors, and even the stories of chivalry. But the book of mightiest inspiration is the *Iliad*, of which it was indispensably necessary to mention yet once more, that it sent "Macedonia's madman and the Swede," to draw glorious lines of blood and devastation across certain portions of the surface of the earth, beckoned on by the Homeric ghost of Achilles. The character of this "amiable hero has been "fated," it seems, like those of the Christian apostles and martyrs, to meet with detractors among the base-minded moderns.

Some modern writers have been pleased to call Achilles a

mad butcher, wading in carnage; but all our love for the arts of peace, and all our respect for that humane philosophy which proscribes war, cannot induce us to join in such brutal abuse, such unseemly degradation of the greatest military hero upon poetic record;”

and there follows a portion of useful composition on the “heroic beauties in his character;” in answer to all which it is sufficient to ask, But *was* he not, after all, “a mad butcher wading in carnage?” There are many excellent observations on an officer’s conduct in war, on the proper combination, while he is a subaltern, of subordination with independence of character, on presence of mind, on the mode of attaching soldiers and inspiring them with confidence, and on that vigour of good sense which, disdaining to be confined to the principles of any school of war, can adapt every operation pointedly to the immediate state of the circumstances. The whole Essay is enlivened by numerous historical examples, selected in general with great judgment and felicity.

The remaining Essays are on the education for the Medical Profession, for the duties of Country Gentlemen, for the profession of the Law, and for Public Life, with a short concluding chapter on the education of a Prince. They involve such a multiplicity of particulars, as to be beyond the power of analysis, had we any room left to attempt it. Nor is there any bold novelty of general principles that can be stated as pervading the whole mass; unless, indeed, we may cite as a novelty the author’s detestation of the political profligacy and low intrigues of what are called public men. This appears in many parts of the book, and is conspicuously displayed in the Essay on the education of men intended for Public Life. And it is quite time it should be displayed by every honest man, since the public mind habitually leans to a forgetfulness or a tolerance of those vices of public men to which the public interests are made a sacrifice. Thus far is well; but when our author proceeds confidently to remedy all these evils by means of the inculcation of pride, honour, and magnanimity (which is only another name for pride, when it is found in such company), we cannot help wondering through what preternatural splitting of his faculties into a very intelligent

part and a very whimsical one, it has happened that the same individual has been in many directions an excellent observer and thinker, but in others a deplorable visionary.

SANSKRIT LITERATURE.

The Rāmāyana of Valmēeki, translated from the Sungskrit, with explanatory Notes. By WILLIAM CAREY and JOSEPH MARSHMAN. Vol. I. containing the first Book. 8vo. 1810.

SCARCELY so much as a third part of a century has passed away, since a large proportion of the wise men of us here in Europe were found looking, with a devout and almost trembling reverence, towards the awful mysteries of Sanskrit literature. The idea which had taken possession of our imagination, was that of a most solemn temple, placed far within the shades of a grove of unmeasured extent and unknown antiquity, in the solitude and twilight of which now and then a daring adventurer had descried at a distance, and contemplated with religious emotion, though but obscurely and partially disclosed to his view, some of its stupendous proportions and columns; while it was doubtfully reported that some one or two still more hardy intruders into those shades had ventured into the immediate precincts, had even presumed within the threshold, and glanced into the awful gloom of the interior. It was not pretended to be known how long this one or more pretended aspirants had dared to continue there, nor what they had been permitted with impunity to behold; and it may for ever remain equally unknown whether it was from what they had the temerity to reveal, or whether it was by any other communication that it had come to be understood among us, that the presence of something divine was perceptible in that dread mansion; and that oracles of a deeper philosophy and a sublimer theology, than had ever been vouchsafed in explanation of matter and spirit, of creatures and creators, in our part of the world, there disclosed the very last abstraction of truth; that there were heard such strains of celestial poetry as would put our inspired or uninspired

bards to silence; and that a tablet of authentic history might there be seen which would unfold to us a retrospect of enormous periods of human existence and agency, anterior to the little modern story about Adam and Eve, and satisfy us that our eras Domini and Mundi measure time on a scale fit enough, perhaps, for the chronicling of wine and strong beer. As to the infinity of idols, not denied to be the occupants of that awful fane, the language of contrast and solemnity but very slightly modified its tone. It was assumed that the measure of our liberality in religion ought to be estimated according to our willingness to admit a variety of claims to divine honours, especially in favour of gods who had splendid religious establishments among an enlightened and happy people (as they were asserted to have been), in an age when we were little better than naked wild beasts, roaming in the woods. The persons making this representation did, besides, very justly guess, that in proportion to our disregard of the one exclusive object of religious homage would be our capacity of admitting and worshipping a million. Our liberality proved not to have been overrated; we were found capable of entertaining the representations which demanded its exercise towards the countless legion of oriental gods; philosophers and scholars conceded to their claims, poets began the direct formalities of worship by writing hymns to them; even ministers of "our" religion spoke of them in reverential terms; and our Christian government has given a most marked attention to the encouragement of their worship in the East.

Some of the earlier of these religious demonstrations were at least premature; as being made previously to the authenticated disclosure of any part of what was enshrined within the holy language, and even while it seemed yet doubtful whether we were not doomed all to die without the benefit of that revelation. We had heard of Vedas and Puranas, and perhaps of Menu, and Vyasa, and Valmiki; and there was no form of reverential sentiment within the "reach of our souls" which we had not associated with these terms and names; but it had been preferable not to have heard of them at all, and not to have associated these sentiments with them, than to be continually reminded by them of the impenetrable darkness which veiled from us

those treasures of wisdom, the possession of which, could they be imparted to us, would deliver us from that painful sense of limited faculties and scanty knowledge, under which we have hitherto been left to suffer in the feeble light of the Bible, of all moral science and literature, and of the Grecian and Roman philosophy and poetry, even notwithstanding the advantageous circumstances of their being pagan.

When at length some hope began to arise that in part the disclosure would soon be made, the eagerness and the seriousness of expectation were not less than would be felt by a man that should have been brought up and confined from his infancy in an apartment which admitted no direct light from the sky, and should at last be assured that to-morrow morning he should be taken out to see the sun rise.

At length the appointed and auspicious hour arrived; and the Geeta appeared on our horizon as the morning-star. In a moment, and in the act of awkwardly imitating Brahminical gestures, we fell prostrate. But, retaining some small remainder of the curiosity and courage characteristic of Englishmen, we presumed, even in this devout posture, to gaze. The effect was very rueful and very comical. For, after gazing a short time, many of the worshippers began to suspect that, if we may be permitted to use a very low word in connexion with what should have been a very high subject, they had been *humbugged*; and that what had been announced to them as the celestial precursor of a grand luminary, might perchance prove to be no other than the fire of a sort of sacred brick-kiln, kindled for the purpose of giving an apotheosis to divers lumps and shapes of clay, which would soon demand a still more prostrate obeisance of these devotees. In plain terms, when those pretenders to superior reason and intellectual freedom,—who had with notable prudence given out that there was cause to believe a more refined wisdom and a more enchanting eloquence are inscribed in the ancient volumes of the Brahminical sanctuary, than any thing that ever emanated from the strongest minds of Europe, or has been displayed in the Jewish and Christian revelations,—obtained at last a translation, by a scholar whose ability and accuracy no one could

venture to question, of what was confessedly the most revered part of one of the most revered works in that sanctuary, they were grievously confounded. And not small was the mortification of those who had suffered themselves to admit in any degree the possible truth of such a representation; while those who had always despised the fiction, had now the opportunity of kindly soothing the vexation of its propagators and believers, by requesting their assistance for the more devout and profitable contemplation of the new light, the vision of the true theology and philosophy, the thunder and lightnings of ardent and sublime poetry. Perhaps a very few attempted to protect themselves by a manful effort of effrontery, stoutly asserting that there *was* a profound philosophy, and what not, discoverable in the production. But the half-dozen (if there were so many, fools or hypocrites for Crishna's sake), could hardly obtain notice enough to be even despised, amidst the general and irresistible conviction, that, however thick the darkness in which we may have been left, by the writings of prophets and apostles, or (still more unaccountably and haplessly) by the greatest efforts of uninspired genius, it is not to the Sanscrit literature we are any longer to look for the intellectual day-spring,—if the poor, tenebrious glimmer of the Geeta be a fair specimen of the Indian lights. For, readers of the most ordinary sense, and even had they been so devoutly prepossessed with the sanctity of the book as to perform ablutions and chant a litany in plain grammatical English to the Hindoo Triad, before presuming to open it, were soon forced to perceive that it bore no one trace of what we in Europe can acknowledge as a strong philosophic mind; that the writer was incapable of elucidating any one thing in heaven or earth; that moon-light in a November fog is too flattering a comparison; that what purports to be of the nature of philosophy and theology is for the most part an utterly inane mysticism, where the reader, while trying hard to make it palpable to his thinking faculty, finds every moment the dim incipient shapes of thought, which seem attempting to rise in his mind, dissipated in perfect vacancy, except where sometimes this mysticism comes to an intelligible notion, in the form of a bouncing absurdity or despicable puerility; that the whole exhibition seems to be

an attempt to amalgamate the lowest fooleries of superstition with certain abstract principles of what is called natural theology, most feebly and remittingly apprehended; that the supreme rule of morality is to annihilate the motives to action; and finally, that what is to be taken for the poetical beauty of the work, consists in exactly those qualities which could not have entered into the composition, but through the writers being destitute of a firm and disciplined intellect.

But lest there should have remained a possibility, after the importation of this sample, that the distressed philosophic inquirers of Europe should still indulge some lingering hope of obtaining, from the sacred literature of India, the theological and moral illumination vainly sought from the Bible—and so should be losing the precious time in which deputations might be sent to try to acquire it from the sages of Caffraria, New Zealand, or the Copper Mine River—further translations soon were to be made from the cyclopædia of the gods. It was impossible for Sir William Jones to be long in India without contriving to get into their library, by means natural or magical, by an entrance terrene, aerial, or subterraneous. He got in accordingly, and through connivance of one of their priests, who “requested most earnestly that his name might be concealed,” stole nothing less than the *Dherma Sastra*, the Institutes of Menu; which not long after, in an English shape, arrived on our shores. And now or never was the chance of ascending into the sky of wisdom, by means of the Brahminical Jacob’s-ladder. For here we might learn about the divine egg, which Brahma came out of, splitting it in halves, the one of which became the heavens, and the other the earth; how the said Brahma alternately works and takes a nap, the one in what is accounted his day, and the other in his night, each of them comprising the space of several thousand millions of our years; how men, of four distinct orders, sprang from four localities of his person; and how he contrived a much more singular mode of origination for a superior and second-rate divine sort of beings, one of the foremost of whom was Menu, who pretends to have taken on himself no little of the business of the creation. In this sacred volume might be seen the full evidence of the more than half-divine

qualities, powers, and prerogatives, innate in one class of human creatures, and of the essential, unchangeable vileness of another; together with the thousands of divinely authorized regulations, according to which the former are even bound in duty to trample on the latter. This venerable document might help to purify our standard of excellence, by celebrating, as of the highest religious merit, a multitude of things compatible with the greatest moral depravity. There the benefit and delight of worshipping an innumerable crew of gods, might be seen, in a ritual inexpressibly silly except where filthy or cruel, and not to be matched for complex multiplicity by all the tracks of noxious and loathsome reptiles at this hour crawling and wriggling in the purlieus of all the pagodas in Hindostan. It could not but be a very dignified and philosophic thing, to prefer the thousand-fold ceremonial about eating rice, to the Christian morality; and to wish the commutation of rational repentance, for propitiatory exercises in cow-dung. And our inquisitiveness concerning a future state, which could find so little for rational belief or sublime and awful speculation in the Christian views of another life, might satisfy its utmost demands for evidence and magnificence now at last, on obtaining a revelation which promises to the eminently good (that is, those that have been the most obstinate in useless austerities), a final beatific absorption amounting to an extinction of individual consciousness: and predicting to the rest a long succession of births, in the course of which the souls of the wicked have a chance of finding themselves lodged in the forms of all sorts of reptiles and vermin, and even of sprouting in weeds from the dung-hill.

The admirable translator seemed to labour under a considerable, and, in some degree, ludicrous perplexity, whereabouts, on the scale of wisdom and sanctity, to fix the place of the Indian demi-god, prophet, and lawgiver. He had gone to the East with an imagination on fire at the idea of those intellectual wonders, which even he, surpassingly illuminated as he was, had to a certain extent suffered himself to believe the Sanscrit had guarded within its mysterious recesses for so many centuries, to be revealed to a happier age. As soon as he dared to hope those recesses might not be impregnable to his own literary ardour, he felt much of

the spirit of the knight-errant, going to rescue the fair princess, Truth, from the durance of an unknown language. In the very reasonable exultation of finding himself at last the master of this language, and thus admitted at once into a world combining perfect novelty with extreme antiquity; thus introduced into a region peopled with sages, to whom so many delusive associations of thought had conspired to give an appearance of almost superhuman venerableness; and thus finding a perfectly new track for ascending far towards the primeval periods of the world—it is not, perhaps, to be accounted strange, that he could not view with altogether undazzled eyes the work which suddenly unfolded to himself, and by which he was suddenly unfolding to the European world, the whole frame of a system which had been the object of ineffectual curiosity and vain conjecture and fable ever since the time of Alexander. And, therefore, while it was impossible for his dignified understanding not to see that he had got into his hands the very quintessence of all manner of absurdity, and impossible for his ingenuousness not to avow this perception in very pointed terms, he yet appeared somewhat reluctant to acknowledge, even to himself, that the system celebrated for thousands of years, as something almost too awful to be profaned by investigation, was absolutely nothing but a compost of whatever was most despicable, and whatever was most hateful, in paganism. It might well be supposed, therefore, that his honest acknowledgment of the futility of the metaphysical conceits, of the monstrous priestcraft, of the ceremonial silliness, of the partially bad morality, and of several other reprobate qualities manifest in the work, was not made without some reluctance and mortification. And this presumption is verified by his evident anxiety to show, as a set-off, certain other qualities alleged to be prominently distinguishable in the Institutes, and which nothing but an imagination, not yet effectually cured of the oriental fever, could have allowed to be described in such terms as the following: “nevertheless, a spirit of sublime devotion,” (devotion to what?) “of benevolence to mankind,” (when a very large proportion of the work, probably much more than half, is employed, directly or indirectly, in adjusting and fixing, in a complete system, the unparalleled iniquity of the distinction of

castes, and the most arrogant and oppressive claims of the Brahmins!) "and of amiable tenderness to all sentient creatures, pervades the whole work: the style of it has a certain austere majesty, that sounds like the language of legislation, and extorts a respectful awe; the sentiments of independence on all beings but God, and the harsh admonitions, even to kings, are truly noble." (Preface, p. xv.) Perhaps it had been as well for this incomparable scholar and estimable man, to have imitated, on this occasion, the prudence of the first invader of Sanscrit, Mr. Wilkins, who, in his preface to the Geeta, stated, with demure and exemplary gravity, that in the estimation of the Brahmins it is the sacred repository of the sublimest doctrines and mysteries, and ventured a conjecture at the design of its author; but avoided committing himself in any estimate of its merits, and slyly threw on the collective Christian wise-men of Europe the responsibility of deciding for or against the divine Brahminical revelation.

The hopes which the appearance of the Geeta had but too desperately blighted, were utterly death-smitten and shrivelled up by the Institutes; since this latter greater work not only had its own due proportion of all that is abhorrent to reason and disgusting to taste, but, as constituting or illustrating the grand basis of the religious economy, it necessarily certified us of what must be, substantially, the quality of the whole mass of sacred rubbish in the repository of Benares. Such then was the end and the reward of the pious faith and hope, with which our benighted spirits had so long been looking towards the expected Brahminical revelations. We were now, for the most part, quite content to forego the privilege of reading any more of their law and their prophets. But our Eastern scholars,—whether it is in order to convince us that our despondency has been premature; or to avenge the rejected gods by plaguing us; or whether a latent zeal for Christianity (how little suspected!), was seeking to drive us into it by an aggravated impetus of recoil; or whether, more probably, it was considered that, as our government has taken the heathen worship under direct and special patronage, it was but a point of consistency to promote the study of the books which give the pattern and celebrate the

objects of that worship;—whatever has been the design, those scholars have, in spite of all our chagrin, and our mutters and murmurs of "*Ohe! jam satis est,*" continued, through the "*Asiatic Researches,*" and other channels, an unremitted and merciless persecution of our galled and mortified feelings, by their successive abstracts and translations from the "holy scriptures" of the Brahmins; and we that, not very long since, had been so confidently anticipating from those sacred works all the delights of the richest poetry, and all the elevating sentiments of a most sublime religion, are feeling and looking just as any person would do, that, having eagerly fallen to devour some supposed choice dainty which proved on trial to be liberally mixed with sand, cinders, and even still less delectable substances, should be forced to prolong the repast, while some of these ingredients were constantly crashing between his teeth. It is perfectly right, however, that this persecution should go on to a yet considerably greater length. Let our infidels, who could have the assurance and the stupidity to affect an air of lightly-dispatching contempt for the authority of the Bible and the reason of its believers, while they were prompt with a manner and language of reverence and affiance at any mention of the Indian Sastras,—let them be glutted and gorged to loathing and stranguation with this Amrita, this their extolled Hindoo elixir of life. Let them enjoy such a regale as Moses gave to the idolatrous Israelites, and be made to drink, in the vehicle of translations from the Sanscrit, the pounded substance of all the Indian gods. The Baptist missionaries, who have now begun to lend a hand in the preparation of this luxury, have a peculiar right to administer it, and to witness the repugnant grimaces of the recipients. For they have been traduced, and hoated, and almost cursed, by all sorts of people, civil and military, lay and ecclesiastical, for their bigotry and fanaticism, in protesting in a Pagan land against the Pagan superstitions. Some refuse substances, put in human shape, have raved and bullied about the flagrant injustice committed against the heathens, in suffering these men to offer to them the Bible as a book worthy to supplant their piles of mythological legends. And persons wishing to carry not only some appearance of decorum, but even somewhat of

the dignity of philosophy, have professed to wish that the narrow-minded zealots for *one religion* had understanding enough to learn the proper respect for the religious institutions and scriptures of other nations, especially those of an immense people, who can point back to a splendid state of their hierarchy and sacred literature in the remotest ages. The most ingenious malice, had that been the actuating principle of the missionaries, could not have fallen on a more effectual expedient of revenge, than that of opening in this manner to the English public those "religions" and "scriptures," to which these judicious persons have taken credit to themselves for extending their liberality. And that they may accomplish in the most decisive manner whatever good is to be effected by this expedient, we earnestly hope their plan will be to translate a moderate portion of several of the most celebrated works, rather than the whole of any one of them. It would be a most deplorable waste of their labour and time to translate the whole, for instance, of the present work, which would probably extend to ten such volumes as that before us. We are persuaded they will be convinced it would be a seriously immoral consumption of time also in the readers, surrounded with such a multitude of better things claiming to be read or to be done, to traverse the whole breadth of such a continent of absurdity. But indeed it is probable no mortal would be found capable of so much perseverance, —except, perhaps, Mr. Twining, and the noted Major, and two or three other personages, the remission of whose pamphleteering labours against the propagation of Christianity in India, may have now left them leisure for so congenial an occupation. And in the daily expectation of the fulfilment of their predictions, that the permitted continuance of the missionaries in India would infallibly cause the speedy and total expulsion of the English from that country, we think these gentlemen should be peculiarly thankful for whatever translated portions of the "holy scriptures" can be obtained, before the catastrophe that will put an end to the translating.

In a much too brief advertisement, the translators state the occasion and nature of their undertaking. The religion and literature, the manners and customs of the Hindoos

have become the objects of a more general curiosity than in any former time, and of these, they observe, "a clear idea can be obtained only from a connected perusal of their writings." Under this impression, Sir J. Anstruther, the late president of the Asiatic Society, had—

"Indicated a wish to the Society of Missionaries at Serampore, that they would undertake the work of translating such of the Sanskrit writings as a committee, formed from the Asiatic Society and the College of Fort-William, should deem worthy of the public notice; and, in consideration of the great expense necessarily attending an undertaking of this nature, these learned bodies generously came forward with a monthly indemnification of 300 rupees. In addition to this, the late President of the Asiatic Society, anxious for the advancement of Eastern literature, addressed a letter to the different learned institutions in Europe soliciting their patronage to this undertaking."

It was proposed to print in the original, accompanied by a translation as nearly literal as the genius of the two languages would admit, the principal works found in the Sanscrit, "particularly those that are held sacred by the Hindoos, or those which may be most illustrative of their manners, their history, or their religion, including also the principal works of science." The committee "made choice of the Ramayuna of Valmoekei to be the first in the series of translations." "The reverence in which it is held, the extent of country through which it is circulated, and the interesting view which it exhibits of the religion, the doctrines, the mythology, the current ideas, and the manners and customs of the Hindoos, combine to justify their selection."

"The translators have only to observe, that a strict conformity to the original has been the object constantly kept in view. To this has been sacrificed, not only elegance of expression, but in some places perspicuity. A free translation would have been an easier task; but esteeming it their duty to lay before the public, not merely the story and machinery, but the imagery, the sentiment, and the very idiom of the poem, they have attempted this as far as the difference of the two languages would permit. And they trust a candid public will excuse every defect of phraseology, when it is understood that the

object has been to present the original poem in its native simplicity."

It may seem a duty of our office to try at something like an abstract of this epic story, or rather farrago; but it is such a formless jumble, that we would gladly be excused from attempting more than a slight notice of the principal matters. There can be no obligation on even the humblest critic, to expend much time on what no intelligent creature in England above the age of ten (unless the epithet intelligent could be applied to a certain half-dozen of heathen pamphleteers), will read without the utmost contempt. Any little value attributable to it, is purely of that incidental kind which is possessed by all literary relics that, however worthless on the score of wisdom or genius, afford illustrations of the state of understanding, of the notions and the manners, of an ancient and remote people. This one claim being admitted and disposed of, there scarcely can be found, within the ample scope of our language, any terms capable of adequately expressing the despicableness of this Indian epic, which has been and continues to be regarded as a *divine* performance by so many millions of the people of Asia; and on the value of even the first little section of which its author, at the close of that section, makes this solemn deposition:—

"This relation imparts life, and fame, and strength, to those who hear it. Whoever reads the story of Rama, will be delivered from all sin. He who constantly peruses this section, in the hearing and repetition of which consists holiness, shall, together with his whole progeny, be for ever delivered from all pain, distress, and sorrow. He who in faith reads this (section) amidst a circle of wise men,* will thereby obtain the fruit which arises from perusing the whole Ramayana, secure to himself the blessings connected with all the states of men, and dying be absorbed into the deity. A brahman, reading this, becomes mighty in learning and eloquence. The descendant of a Kshatriya reading it would become a monarch; a Vishya reading, will obtain a most prosperous degree of trade; and a Shoodra hearing† it, will become great."—P. 18.

* "This is one mode in which, with much solemnity, the Ramayana is constantly read."

† "A Shoodra is not permitted to read it."

This gives a very tolerable antepast of the general quality of the work, in point of what, in our part of the world, is called *sense*. And, indeed, the grand characteristic distinction of this performance, so far as it proceeds in this volume, and of the other great works, as they are termed, of Hindoo genius, so far as may be judged from short portions of them translated, is the *negation of reason*. Imagine a tribe of human beings in whom the intellectual faculty, strictly so called, should suddenly become extinct while imagination remained, and on being thus rid of its master, should instantly spring abroad into all the possibilities of wild and casual excursion; the *geniuses* of such a tribe, that is, the individuals possessed of a more lively imagination than the rest, would write just such poetry as the *Ramayana*. It shows, throughout, we do not say a violation, or rejection, but rather a clear absence, a total non-perception, of the principles of proportion and analogy, of the laws of consistency and probability. There is a full abrogation of all the rules, definitive of the relation between cause and effect. Consequently any cause may produce any effect; the mouse may eat the mountain, Jonah may swallow the whale; and the author appears to rate his success in the effort at grandeur very much in proportion to the aggravated excess of the absurdity—the superlative *degree*, if we might so express it, of the impossibility. Probability is assumed for every proposition or image that may be *put in words*, though by its essential inconsistency it defy the power of conception. And if, for a few moments, the poet happens to keep clear of things impossible in the strict sense, that is, things of which the definition would involve a contradiction, he can hardly fail to be found in what is, doubtless, according to whoever is the Hindoo Longinus, the next lower degree of sublimity, the creating of monstrosities; describing beings and actions which, though not metaphysically impossible, are out of all analogy with what we see or can otherwise know of the order of the creation. Thus a creature with an elephant's body and fifty human heads, singing a grand chorus, is not an impossible thing in the strict sense, however desperate an undertaking it might be to go in search of it to any part of the mundane system; and the only objection a Hindoo poet would have to

such a fiction, would arise from its being too diminutive and tame an effort of absurdity,—unless he might be allowed to say that the body was of the bulk of a vast mountain, and that each of the heads roared a tempest.

It is but very rarely, that for a moment the absurdity of this poetry is confined to anything so near the neighbourhood of rationality, as what we may denominate simple enormousness,—that is, the swelling of agents and actions to a magnitude, which we know to be far beyond any thing in reality, but still in conformity to a certain scale, by which these extraordinary beings are kept in some assignable proportion to the ordinary ones of their genus, and by which a due proportion is kept between the agents and the things they accomplish; as Homer, a manufacturer of giants in a very small way, contrives to avoid disgusting us when he makes some of his combatants easily toss such stones as ten men of the common sort could not lift. Even in the description of the people of Brobdignag (to say nothing of the strong satirical sense which is the substratum of all the Gulliver fictions), a strict law of consistency and proportion is observed throughout all the prodigious giantisms, evincing the constant intervention of intellect. In the Ramayuna, all is pure measureless raving. An imagination which seems to combine the advantages of mania, superstition, and drunkenness, is put a-going, makes a set of what it names worlds, of its own, and fills them with all sorts of agents—gods, sages, demi-god-monkeys, and a numberless diversity of fantastic entities, at once magnified and distorted to the last transcendent madness of extravagance,—some additional monster still striding and bellowing into the hurly-burly, whenever the poet thinks it not sufficiently turbulent and chaotic. None of these agents are exhibited with any defined nature, or ascertained measure of power, or regular mode of action. They any of them can do, and are made to do, just whatever happens to dash into the fancy of the poetic raver. A sage is represented as frightening all the gods; and if the idea of his ordering and forcing them all into his snuff had happened to come into the poet's head, they had undoubtedly been made to hold their court there some ten thousand years, at the least. And thus the narration, if so slightly connected a course of stories can be

so called, is made up of a set of achievements which confound all attempts to form a steady notion of the nature and capacities, positive or relative, of any of the beings that accomplish them; while the stories are so perfectly matchless in silly extravagance, that the very utmost absurdity and foolery of the most desperate European rant and mock-heroic, creep and toil, as if under the weight of comparative rationality, at an infinite distance behind the enormous vapour-composed giant of Hindoo poetry. The more the writer displays of *his* sort of grandeur, the more contempt the reader feels; the measureless vastness of all the personages and operations, which was sublimity in his account, and which almost overpowers all the Brahmins of Hindostan with religious awe, is to us exactly imbecility seen through an immensely magnifying medium: and the mind labours for a greater ability of despising, than it has ever, in the ordinary course of its exercise, been excited to acquire.

It is as a reputed great work of genius that the Ramayuna will encounter utter contempt in Europe, separately from, as far as we can separate and make allowances for its character, as a teacher of a monstrous and puerile mythology. When this kind of allowance has been made for Homer, Virgil, and Ovid, what remains is, that they are very great poets. Even the advantage usually and reasonably proposed to be communicated by making better known the ancient writings of a people, that of our obtaining a knowledge of their manners from pictures drawn by themselves, will be sought in vain from a performance like this, in which all things are ambitiously, though childishly, preternatural. It was, for instance, probably no part of the ancient manners and customs of India, for an individual to perform sacred austerities, as they are called, in a particular place for a thousand, or ten thousand years together.

As to what form the beautiful spangles of our western poetry and eloquence, the original and apposite metaphors and comparisons, we should think there is nothing of the kind to be found in this grand oriental performance. There are indeed metaphors and comparisons, but, as far as we can judge, they are a mere common place of the country where the poet lived. The moon and stars, a number of animals and vegetables, some particular gods and heroes,

&c. &c., were become a common stock for the use of all that wanted tropes in speech or writing; so that there was no more novelty or ingenuity in introducing them, than there is among us in repeating those rare similes, as rotten as a pear, as sound as a bell, as obstinate as a swine, as valiant as Alexander, and so forth. It is not to be pointedly objected to this, or any other eastern performance in particular, that the analogy in the simile or metaphor is usually very slight and general, as this is a characteristic of almost all oriental composition.

The quantity of general remark we have been betrayed into, leaves no room for any attempt at displaying in detail the qualities or parts of this first book of the Ramayuna. And we repeat, we cannot acknowledge any duty of wasting so much labour on what forms a more egregious mass of folly than would be produced by any one of our readers that should keep a month's diary (or rather *noctuary*, since they undoubtedly all rise early in a morning) of his dreams. In the descriptive remarks we have made, we have been able to give but an extremely feeble idea of the surpassing excess of absurdity which prevails throughout the production, which is really worth any one's reading that cares to see the *maximum* of that quality. The basis of the story is the birth, life, and adventures of Rama, who is an incarnation of the god Vishnu, a god evidently of the foremost rank, but of *what* power or excellence, as contradistinguished from his brother *magnates*, we may safely defy all the Brahmins in India, and their disciples in England, to show, from this or their other sacred books; for all these doities seem jumbled, as by purely accidental evolutions, into bigness and littleness by turns. The king, whose son Vishnu consented to become at the persuasion of all the gods, who were terrified by Ravuna, a demon whose pernicious designs could be frustrated by no celestial being but one in human shape, had been long childless, and had been performing a course of religious austerities to obtain from Brahma (or whether in spite of him, is not clear), the happiness of an heir. The favour was granted, and Rama was the prince. He of course gave, in early years, amazing signs of the power that was in due time to perform achievements which were to astonish and shake the universe. Many adventures, how-

ever, are related before his career of action commences; and after he does come into play, the narration is loaded with many bulky episodes about the adventures of other heroes. Of one of these personages it is stated that, like Rama's father, he was childless, and that he had been engaged, if we mistake not, several thousand years in religious austerities, to induce the gods, or the king of them, to confer a similar favour. It was granted to some purpose; for he had two consorts, and it was promised that the one should bring him one son of transcendent merit and prowess, and the other—sixty thousand, inferior to that one, but yet all of great talents and expectations; and it was offered to the choice of the two ladies which would be the mother of the one, and which of the sixty thousand. The latter undertaking may seem to involve very considerable difficulties;—but nothing is difficult in the hands of a Hindoo poet. This daring matron was in due time happily delivered of a tree, a shrub, or whatever it may be called,—a gourd we think it is in the book;—on which the sixty thousand grow, as it might have been nuts or currants, and fell off into the form of so many mighty heroes; who at their father's command, and in pursuit of a god or demon who had stolen a horse which he had appointed for a sacrifice, dug through the earth from side to side, in various directions, reducing it to the condition of a worm-eaten cork; and that in a very short time, and in spite of its being of thousands of times greater bulk, than our mathematicians have, in the true spirit of European littleness, mistakenly computed. Another history is to this effect: A royal sage had a cow named Shubula. When another monarch sage, in marching through the country, stopped on the former sage's farm a little while with a vast army, this cow gave all sorts of liquors, and all sorts of meat, baked, boiled, fried, and in short cooked to the taste of every individual in the army, insomuch that every man was delighted and surprisingly fattened. On going away, it is not wonderful that his majesty at the head of the army, should, if it had only been to rid himself of his peculating commissariat, request to have this cow, offering, however, a handsome equivalent, as he might very well afford. The request not being complied with, force was had recourse to to take her away. She, however, made her escape, and came

weeping and expostulating to the feet of her owner. He was afraid to interfere, but she was advised to do the best she could for herself. On which she forthwith rained out an almost innumerable army of terrific warriors, who drove, cut, and slashed at such a rate, that the host of the royal cow-stealer was quickly annihilated. These are tolerably moderate specimens of the general substance of this epic performance. The lingo in which these feats are narrated, defies all imitation.

We cannot fail to be somewhat the wiser for having a few such things brought into our language; but we think the moral rule relative to the use of time and paper should withstand any very large importations. But, indeed, taste will do what morality probably would not; for it will be impossible to find in England any considerable number of readers who will not soon sicken at such entertainment. If there are any ingenuous men, who, not content to rest religion on plain reason and revelation, must needs seek its primitive elements in an analysis of this branch of ancient mythology, they had much the best go and learn Sanscrit at once.

An insurmountable obstacle to the popularity of this sort of reading in Europe, if the works were attended by no other deterring circumstance, would be the vast number of names by which each of the gods or heroes is designated, this being, as it should seem, hardly fewer than the whole catalogue of descriptive epithets deemed most appropriate to them. We should observe that the learned translators would not have done amiss, to assign their reason for an orthography so widely different from that commonly adopted by our oriental scholars.

THE MORALITY OF WORKS OF FICTION.

Tales of Fashionable Life. By MISS EDGEWORTH, Author of *Practical Education*, *Belinda*, &c. 12mo. 1810.

On the supposition, or the chance, that any small number of our readers may not have taken the trouble to acquaint

themselves with the distinguishing qualities of the productions of a writer, who has already contributed the amount of more than twenty volumes to the otherwise scanty stock of our literature,—and, if we may judge from the short interval between the works in the latter part of the series, is likely at the very least, to double the number,—it may not be amiss to set down a very few observations, suggested chiefly by the perusal of one portion of her performances, though it belongs by its form to a department over which we do not pretend any right of habitual censorship.

It is evident this writer has a much higher object than merely to amuse. Being very seriously of opinion that mankind want mending, and that she is in possession of one of the most efficacious arts for such a purpose, she has set about the operation in good earnest. But when any machine, material or moral, is wrong, there are a few very obvious prerequisites to the attempt to set it right. The person that undertakes it should know what the machine was designed for; should perceive exactly what part of its present action is defective or mischievous; should discern the cause of this disordered effect; and, for the choice of the implements and method of correction, should have the certainty of the adept, instead of the guesses of the tampering experimenter, or the downright hardihood of ignorant presumption. When the disordered subject to be operated on is a thing of no less importance than human nature, it should seem that these prerequisites are peculiarly indispensable; and the existence ought to be inferable from the operator's boldness, if we see him putting to the work so confident a hand as that of our author. A hand more confident, apparently, has very seldom been applied to the business of moral correction; and that business is prosecuted in a manner so little implying, on the part of our author, any acknowledgment that she is working on a subordinate ground, and according to the lowest class of the principles of moral discipline,—and therefore so little hinting even the existence of any more elevated and authoritative principles,—that she is placed within the cognizance of a much graver sort of criticism than would at first view, appear applicable to a writer of tales. She virtually takes the rank among the teachers who profess to exhibit the

comprehensive theory of duty and happiness. She would be considered as undertaking the treatment of what is the most serious and lamentable, as well as what is most light and ridiculous, in human perversity; and according to a method which at all events cannot be exceeded in *soundness*, however it may prove in point of efficacy.

Now when we advert to the prerequisites for such an undertaking, we cannot repress the suspicion that our author is unqualified for it. It is a grand point of incompetency if she is totally ignorant what the human race exists for. And there appears nothing in the present, or such other of her works as we have happened to look into, to prevent the surmise, that this question would completely baffle her. Reduce her to say what human creatures were made for, and there would be an end of her volubility. Whether our species were intended as an exhibition for the amusement of some superior, invisible, and malignant intelligences; or were sent here to expiate the crimes of some pre-existent state; or were made for the purpose, as some philosophers will have it and phrase it, of *developing the faculties of the earth*, that is to say, managing its vegetable produce, extracting the wealth of its mines, and the like; or were merely a contrivance for giving to a certain number of atoms the privilege of being, for a few years, the constituent particles of warm upright living figures;—whether they are appointed to any future state of sentiment, or rational existence;—whether, if so, it is to be one fixed state, or a series of transmigrations; a higher or lower state than the present; a state of retribution, or bearing no relation to moral qualities;—whether there be any Supreme Power, that presides over the succession and condition of the race, and will see to their ultimate destination,—or, in short, whether there be any design, contrivance, or intelligent destination in the whole affair, or the fact be not rather, that the species, with all its present circumstances, and whatever is to become of it hereafter, is the production and sport of chance,—all these questions are probably undecided in the mind of our ingenious moralist. And how can she be qualified to conduct the discipline of a kind of beings of the nature and relations of which she is so profoundly ignorant? If it were not a serious thing on account of its

presumption, would it not be an incomparably ludicrous one on account of its absurdity, that a popular instructor should be most busily enforcing a set of principles of action—not as confessedly superficial and occasional, and merely subservient to a specific purpose, but as fundamental and comprehensive—while that instructor does not know whether the creatures, whose characters are attempted to be formed on those principles, are bound or not by the laws of a Supreme Governor, nor whether they are to be affected by the right or wrong of moral principles for only a few times twelve months, or to all eternity? Here an admirer of Miss Edgeworth's moral philosophy might be expected to say, "But why may not our professor be allowed to set these considerations out of the question; since many things in the theory of morals are very clear and very important independently of them? Integrity, prudence, industry, generosity, and good manners, can be shown to be vitally connected with our immediate interests, and powerfully enforced on that ground, whether there be or be not a Supreme Governor and Judge, and a future life; and why may not our instructor hold this ground, exempt from the interference of theology? What we see we know: we can actually survey the whole scope of what you call the *present* life of human creatures, and can discern how its happiness is affected by the virtues and vices which our professor so forcibly illustrates and why may it not be a very useful employment to teach the art of happiness *thus far*, whatever may ultimately be found to be the truth or error of the speculations on invisible beings and future existences?"

To this the obvious reply would be, first—in terms of identical import with those we have already used—that the ingenious preceptress does not give her pupils the slightest word of warning, that it is *possible* their moral interests may be of an extent infinitely beyond anything she takes into account: that if the case is so, her philosophy however useful to a certain length, in a particular way, cannot but be infinitely inadequate as a disciplinary provision for their *entire* interests; and that, therefore, in consideration of such a possibility, it is their serious duty to inquire how much more it may be indispensable to learn, than she ever professes to teach them. She does not tell them, and would

deem it excessively officious and fanatical in any one that should do it for her, that if there be any truth—nay, if there be the bare *possibility* of truth—in what religionists believe and teach—a philosopher like her cannot be admitted as competent to contribute to the happiness of mankind, in a much higher capacity than the persons that make clothes and furnish houses. She may not, in so many words, assert it would be idle or delusive to think of proposing any superior and more remotely prospective system of moral principles: but all appearances are carefully kept up to the point of implying as much; and we apprehend she would be diverted, or would be fretted, just as the mood of her mind happened at the moment to be, to hear a sensible person, after reading her volumes, say: “Very just, very instructive, on a narrow and vulgar ground of moral calculation; it is well fitted to make me a reputable sort of a man, and not altogether useless, during a few changes of the moon: if I were sure of ending after a few of those changes, in nothing but a clod, I do not know that I should want anything beyond the lessons of this philosopher’s school: but while I believe there is even a chance of a higher destiny, it is an obvious dictate of common sense, that it cannot be safe, and that it would be degrading, to attempt to satisfy myself with a little low-scheme of morality, adapted to nothing in existence beyond the mere *convenience* of some score or two of years, more or less.” Our *first* censure is, then, that setting up for a moral guide, our author does not pointedly state to her followers, that as it is but a very short stage she can pretend to conduct them, they had need—if they suspect they shall be obliged to go farther—to be looking out, even in the very beginning of this short stage in which she accompanies them, for other guides to undertake for their safety in the remoter region. She presents herself with the air and tone of a person, who would sneer or spurn at the apprehensive insinuated inquiry, whether any change or addition of guides might eventually become necessary.

But, secondly, our author’s moral system—on the hypothesis of the truth, or possible truth, of revelation—is not only infinitely deficient, as being calculated to subserve the interests of the human creatures only to so very short a distance, while yet it carefully keeps out of sight all that

may be beyond ; it is also—still on the same hypothesis—perniciously erroneous as far as it goes. For it teaches virtue on principles on which virtue itself will not be approved by the Supreme Governor ; and it avowedly encourages some dispositions, and directly or by implication tolerates others, which in the judgment of that Governor are absolutely vicious. As to the unsound quality of the virtue here taught, it would be quite enough to observe, that it bears no reference whatever to the will and laws of a superior Being. It is careless whether there is such a Being,—whether, if there be, men are accountable to him, or not,—whether he has appointed laws,—whether he can enforce them,—whether he can punish the refusal to obey them. In short it is a virtue that would *not be practised for his sake* ; which is to be practised solely under the influence of other considerations ; and which would be, at the dictate of these considerations, varied to any extent from any standard alleged to bear his authority. It is really superfluous to say that, on the religious hypothesis, such a virtue is utterly spurious, and partakes radically of the worst principles of vice. It is, besides, unstable in all its laws, as being founded on a combination of principles undefined, arbitrary, capricious, and sometimes incompatible. Pride, honour, generous impulse, calculation of temporal advantage and custom of the country, are conveyed along with we know not how many other grave authorities, as the components of Miss Edgeworth's moral government—the Amphictyons of her legislative assembly. These authorities being themselves subject, singly or collectively, to no one paramount authority, may vary without end in their compromise with one another, and in their enactment of laws ; so that by the time Miss Edgeworth comes to write her last volume in the concluding year of her life, she may chance to find it necessary—in maintaining a faithful adherence to them through all their caprices—to give the name of virtues to sundry things she now calls vices, and *vice versa*. There can be no decisive casuistry on the ground of such a system ; and it would be easy to imagine situations in which the question of duty would, even under the present state of that moral legislation which she enjoins us to revere, put her to as complete a

nonplus as the question, "What was man made for?" She is, however, dexterous enough, in general, to avoid such situations. It must be acknowledged, too, that perhaps the greater part of the moral practice which she sanctions, is, taken *merely* as practice, disconnected from all consideration of motives and opinions, substantially the same that the soundest moralist must inculcate,—unless his lectures could be allowed to be silent on the topics of justice in the transactions of business, the advantages of cultivating a habit of general kindness and liberality, exertions for amending the condition of the poor, patient firmness in the prosecution of good designs, with various other things of a character equally unequivocal. But there are some parts of her practical exhibitions unmarked with any note of disapprobation, where a Christian moralist would apply the most decided censure. She shows, for instance, a very great degree of tolerance for the dissipation of the wealthy classes, if it only stop short of utter frivolity or profligacy, and of ruinous expense. All the virtue she demands of them may easily comport with the prodigious quantity of fashion, and folly, and splendour, and profuseness. They may be allowed to whirl in amusements till they are dead sick, and then have recourse to a little sober useful goodness to recover themselves. They are indeed advised to cultivate their minds; but, as it should seem, for the purpose, mainly, of giving dignity to their rank, and zest and sparkle to the conversations of their idle and elegant parties. They are recommended to become the promoters of useful schemes in their neighbourhoods, and the patrons of the poor; but it does not appear that this philanthropy is required to be carried the length of costing any serious percentage on their incomes. The grand and ultimate object of all the intellectual and moral exertions to which our author is trying to coax and prompt them, is confessedly,—self-complacency; and it is evident that, while surrounded incessantly with frivolous and selfish society to compare themselves with, they may assume this self-complacency on the strength of very middling attainments in wisdom and beneficence.

Another gross fault (on the supposition, still, that religion ~~may~~ chance to be more than an idle fancy) is our author's

tolerance of profaneness. As to some of the instances of what every pious man would regard as profane expressions, either absolutely or by the connexion in which they are put, she will say, perhaps, that they are introduced merely as a language appropriate to the characters; and that those characters were never meant for patterns of excellence. This plea is of little validity for any narrator but the historian of real facts, who has but a partial option as to what he shall relate. In a merely literary court indeed it might go some length in defence of a fictitious writer; but let religion be introduced among the judges in such a court, and the decision would be, that minute truth of fictitious representation involves no moral benefit adequate to compensate the mischief of familiarizing the reader's mind to language which associates the most solemn ideas with the most trifling or detestable. But this happens, in the present instance, to be a needless argument; for the broadest and vilest piece of profaneness comes out in one of what are intended as the *finest* moments, of one of what are intended as the *finest* characters, in all these volumes. The character,—a spirited, generous, clever fellow, evidently a high favourite of our author,—is young Beaumont, in the tale entitled “*Manœuvring*,” in the third volume; the moment is when he is exulting (p. 78) at the news of a great naval victory, in which his most esteemed friend is supposed to have had a share.

We will only add, in order to get to the end of this homily of criticism, that our author's estimate of the evil of vice in general, excepting such vices as are glaringly marked with meanness or cruelty, appears to be exceedingly light in comparison with that which is taught in the school of revelation. And, consistently with this, the sentiments of penitential grief which she attributes to one of her principal characters, Lord Glenthorn, whom she reforms from a very great degree of profligacy, are wonderfully superficial and transient: nay, he is even made, in the commencement of his reformation, to reckon up the virtues of his past worthless and vicious life, with a self-complacency which far over-balanced his self-reproaches. And, indeed, those self-reproaches when they were felt, had but extremely little of the quality of what in Christian language is meant by

repentance: they are made to have expressed themselves much more in the manner of mortified pride. And this, again, is in perfect consistency with the motives to virtue on which the chief reliance appears to be placed throughout these volumes: for the most powerful of those motives is pride. To manœuvre this passion in every mode which ingenuity can suggest; to ply it with every variety of stimulus, and contrive that at each step of vice something shall happen to mortify it,—if possible, according to the regular and natural course of cause and effect; if not, by some extraordinary occurrence, taking place at the will of the writer,—and that each step of virtue shall be attended by some circumstance signally gratifying to it,—this is the grand moral machinery of our moralist and reformer. And, indeed, what else could she do, or what better, after she had resolved that no part of her apparatus should be put in action by “the powers of the world to come?” For as to that intrinsic beauty of virtue which philosophers have pretended to decry and adore, *this* philosopher knew right well how likely it was that such a vision should disclose itself, with all its mystical fascinations, to the frequenters of ball-rooms and card-tables, of galas and operas, of gambling-houses and brothels.

Thus denied, by the quality of the subjects she has to work upon, the assistance of all that has been boasted by sages as the most refined and elevated in philosophy,—and by the limits of her creed, probably, as well as the disposition of her taste, the assistance of those principles professing to come from heaven, and which, whencesoever they have come, have formed the best and sublimest human characters that ever appeared on earth,—our moralist would be an object of much commiseration, if she did not manifest the most entire self-complacency. Yet it is but justice to say that she does not attribute any miraculous power to those sordid, moral principles, on the sole operation of which she is content to rest her hopes of human improvement. For on Lord Glen-thorn, the hero of the longest and most interesting of these tales, she represents this operation as totally inefficacious till aided by the discovery that he is no Lord; having been substituted in his infancy for the true infant peer by Ellinor O'Donoghoe, the inhabitant of a dirty mud cabin,

his mother, and that peer's nurse. And the subject which is thus made to illustrate the inefficacy, is notwithstanding represented as naturally endowed with very favourable dispositions and very good talents. In the stories of "Almeria" and "Manœuvring," the utmost powers of the reforming discipline are honestly represented as fairly baffled, from beginning to end, the culprits adhering to their faults and follies with inviolable fidelity,—leaving our moral legislator no means of vindicating the merits of her system, but to show that the pride, and other inglorious principles, by the operation of which a reform of conduct was to have been effected, if they cannot amend the subjects of her discipline, can at least make them wretched. And so she leaves them, with as much indifference apparently as that with which a veteran sexton comes away from filling up the grave of one of his neighbours. She does not even, as far as appears, wish to turn them over to Methodism, notwithstanding that this has the repute of sometimes working very strange transformations, and might as well have been mentioned as a last expedient worth the trying, in some of those obstinate desperate cases in which all the preparations from the great laboratory at Edgeworthstown, have been employed in vain. Perhaps, however, our author would think such a remedy, even in its utmost success, worse than the disease. Yet it would be a little curious to observe what she really *would* think and say at witnessing an instance in which a person, who had long pursued a foolish or profligate course in easy defiance of all such correctives as constitute her boasted discipline, being, at length, powerfully arrested by the thought of a judgment to come,—should forswear at once all his inveterate trifling or deeper immoralities, and adopt, and prosecute to his last hour, and with the highest delight, a far more arduous plan of virtue than any that she has dared to recommend or delineate. There have been very many such instances; and it would be extremely amusing—if some ideas too serious for amusement were not involved,—on citing to her some indubitable example of this kind, to compel her to answer the plain question: "Is this a good thing—yea or no?"

It was almost solely for the purpose of making a few remarks on the moral tendency of our author's voluminous

productions, that we have noticed the work of which we have transcribed the title; and we need say very few words respecting the other qualities of her books. For predominant good sense, knowledge of the world, discrimination of character, truth in the delineation of manners, and spirited dialogue, it is hardly possible to praise them too much. Most of her characters are formed from the most genuine and ordinary materials of human nature,—with very little admixture of anything derived from heaven, or the garden of Eden, or the magnificent part of the regions of poetry. There is rarely anything to awaken for one moment the enthusiasm of an aspiring spirit, delighted to contemplate, and ardent to resemble, a model of ideal excellence. Indeed, a higher order of characters would in a great measure have precluded an exercise of her talents, in which she evidently delights, and in which she very highly excels—that is, the analyzing of the mixed motives by which persons are often governed, while they are giving themselves credit for being actuated by one simple and perfectly laudable motive; the detecting of all the artifices of dissimulation; and the illustration of all the modes in which selfishness pervades human society. Scarcely has Swift himself evinced a keener scent in pursuit of this sort of game; a sort of game which, we readily acknowledge it is, with certain benevolent limitations, very fair and useful to hunt. And we must acknowledge, too, that our author, while passing shrewd, is by no means cynical. She is very expert at contriving situations for bringing out all the qualities of her personages, for contrasting those personages with one another, for creating excellent amusement by their mutual reaction, and for rewarding or punishing their merits or faults. She appears intimately acquainted with the prevailing notions, prejudices, and habits of the different ranks and classes of society. She can imitate very satirically the peculiar diction and slang of each; and has contrived (but indeed it needed very little contrivance) to make the fashionable dialect of the upper ranks sound exceedingly silly. As far as she has had opportunities for observation, she has caught a very discriminative idea of national characters: that of the Irish is delineated with incomparable accuracy and spirit. It may be added, that our author,

possessing a great deal of general knowledge, finds many lucky opportunities for producing it, in short arguments and happy allusions. Unless we had some room for a distinct notice of each of the tales in these volumes, it will be no use to mention that their titles are the following—"Ennui," "Almeria," "Madame de Fleury," "The Dun," and "Manoeuvring;" the first and the last each filling an entire volume.

ON CRUELTY TO ANIMALS.

Speech of the RIGHT HON. W. WINDHAM in the House of Commons, June 13, 1809, on Lord Eiskine's Bill for the more effectual Prevention of Cruelty towards Animals 8vo. 1810

THE proposal of this Bill to the House of Commons, and the prompt and unceremonious dismissal, are sufficiently fresh in recollection. Its fate would doubtless have been the same in that Imperial assembly, though the author of this Speech had been summoned from his seat there before the subject came into discussion. Had it, however, been possible that a great, enlightened, and humane legislature could have felt any slight degree of hesitation to reject a motion for a law to abridge the license of cruelty; it may well be believed that a speech like this would materially contribute to rid them of the sentimental weakness of entertaining such a scruple. It would have been a truly girlish and laughable thing in a venerable Council—before which an enormous mass of cruelty was incontrovertibly alleged to be habitually perpetrated among the people over whom that Council presided—to have given themselves any trouble about the matter, after witnessing this capital display of that acuteness, that talent for representing a serious subject in a ludicrous light, that power of securing tolerancé for a large quantity of fallacy, under protection of a certain portion of important truth, which so remarkably characterized this statesman; we suppose we ought to say *lamented* statesman: for we observe it is the fashion among all sorts of people—Christian or infidel—high political party or low—ins or outs—as soon as a man whose talents have made a

figure is gone, to extol him in the topmost epic and elegiac phrases; even though the general operation of his talents had been through life what these very persons had a thousand times execrated as pernicious.

The Speech begins with asserting, that the treatment of brute animals by men, is not a fit subject for legislative enactments; and by citing, as a strong sanction of the rule of exclusion, the conduct of all nations and legislators, none of whom, according to our senator, ever appointed any laws for the protection of animals, on the pure principle of humane guardianship,—an assertion which he makes in the most unqualified manner, and which his extensive learning would make it rash in us to call in question; since it could not have escaped his knowledge if any national code of laws had ever contained such a sentence as this—"thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn."

From this universal avoidance to enact laws for the protection of brute animals, Mr. Windham argues, that what Lord Erskine mentions, in somewhat exulting terms as a recommendation of his bill, "that it would form a new era of legislation," is rather a ground for suspicion and rejection; since it is not unfair to presume that what all legislators have avoided to do, is something not proper to be done. With plenty of cold shrewdness he adds,—

"We ought to have a reasonable distrust of the founders of such eras, lest they should be a little led away by an object of such splendid ambition, and be thinking more of themselves than of the credit of the laws or the interests of the community. To have done that which no one yet had ever thought of doing; to have introduced into legislation, at this period of the world, what had never yet been found in the laws of any country, and that too for a purpose of professed humanity (or rather of something more than humanity, as commonly understood and practised); to be the first who had stood up as the champion of the rights of brutes, was as marked a distinction, even though it should not turn out upon examination to be as proud a one, as man could well aspire to."—P. 4.

The sentence which immediately follows is this: "The Legislature, however, must not be carried away with these impulses, of whatever nature they might be," &c. Those who heard and saw Mr. Windham while uttering this, could

probably judge whether it was said sarcastically, or in simple honest gravity. The only thing that *can* make this a question in the minds of those who can merely read the speech, is the recollection of Mr. Windham's notorious propensity to sarcasm; for that there was a propriety in uttering the sentence gravely, is sufficiently obvious. There was the greatest need of a caution against the too precipitate impulses of humanity in a Legislature which had, through twenty years of most ample discussion and exposure, maintained the slave-trade, with its infinite combination of horrors, in easy and sometimes jocular contempt of the appeals to feeling, in a thousand affecting forms; in contempt of the demonstrations of impolicy, and of the references to an Almighty Avenger; and which, when approaching at last, under the ascendancy of administration for the time being, to the long-desired abolition, had still such a character in the public opinion that, even when the vast influence of the ministry was taken into the account, the friends of humanity were nevertheless, according to Mr. Clarkson's relation, in a perfect agony of fear till the decision was past. It had been a neglect of duty not to have cautioned, against too hasty and undigested measures for the repression of cruelty, a Legislature which had scouted, during the greatest part of a long series of years, every suggestion of an effort for the termination of war. And (to descend to an inferior circumstance) the manner in which the Legislature had entertained Mr. Windham's own assertion of the moral and political benefits of bull-baiting, with all its inseparable blackguardism and profaneness, as contrasted with the mischievous effects of going to the conventicle, to hear about the worth of the soul, preparation for a future state, and such like matters—had fully shown him the propriety of admonishing that Legislature not to be rashly impetuous in their enactments even against barbarous practices. There was no lesson so becoming in the veteran senator, so near the end of his labours, to give, nor half so needful to the assembly which he addressed—as that which virtuous and ardent minds so reluctantly learn, the wisdom of being sometimes a little more slow and deliberate even in doing good, than the first generous "impulses" would be willing to permit. There is no knowing to what

dangerous lengths such impulses may lead, if unrestrained by such wisdom. Had this bill, for instance, for the prevention of cruelty to animals been suffered to pass, who was to insure the country against being brought, at the next parliamentary movement of these "impulses," to the brink of irretrievable ruin, by an act to abrogate, in spite of Mr. Windham's cool approbation of its existence (p. 9), that power under the poor-laws, by the exercise of which, he says, "paupers at the point of death, and women expecting at every moment to be seized with the pangs of labour, are turned out into the streets or roads, sooner than by the death in one case, or the birth in the other, a burden should be brought upon the parish?"

Next comes the customary cant, proper always to be canted, when a practical attempt at doing some good is to be opposed, about the "desirableness of the object, speaking abstractedly." "As far," says he, "as mere uninstructed wishes went, every man must wish that the sufferings of all animated nature were less than they are." That this sort of language fully deserves, in this place, the name we have given it, we shall have occasion to show. The speaker does however, it must be confessed, go on to say, that we must not in so good a cause be content with mere wishes; and, defining morality itself "a desire rationally conducted to promote general happiness," he exhorts all, in their private individual capacity, to do all they can to lessen the measure of suffering, as well among the brute as the rational animals. Excuse him from any duty of promoting the good design in his high capacity of legislator, in which he has so much more than the power of a mere private person,—and he will lecture the whole nation on the duty of every man as a private person, to exert the utmost of his inferior power in the prevention of cruelty; and on the absurdity of a people's expecting their governors to be virtuous in substitution for them. It is thus that moral obligations are bandied from class to class in society: the people alleging that some important reform cannot be effected without the interposing power of their governors, and the governors declaring that the concern is not within the proper sphere of legislation—nay, it may be, professing that they *cannot* so far interfere with the "*liberty of the subject!*" Anything in the strain

of this last profession coming from such a man as Mr. Windham is, to be sure, incomparably ludicrous.

In the desultory manner that prevails throughout this Speech, which is quite as disorderly as it is acute, the orator proceeds to animadvert on Lord Erskine's preamble to his bill, framed in the following terms: "Whereas it has pleased Almighty God to subdue to the dominion, use, and comfort of man, the strength and faculties of many useful animals, and to provide others for his food; and whereas the abuse of that dominion, by cruel and oppressive treatment of such animals is not only highly unjust and immoral, but most pernicious in its example, having an evident tendency to harden the heart against the natural feelings of humanity." "A preamble," says Mr. Windham, "containing a lofty maxim of morality or theology, too grand to be correct; too sublime to be seen distinctly, and most ludicrously disproportioned to the enactments that follow." From which observation it should be evident that the less a legislator adverts to the Supreme Lawgiver the better, and that no sublime conceptions can be correct or distinct. *Why* the disproportion is inevitably so great between the "lofty maxim" and the enactments of the bill, is in part most forcibly shown by Mr. Windham himself, where he represents the impossibility of making effectual laws against the cruelties practised by the rich.

It was also very unfair, in remarking this disparity, to take no notice of Lord Erskine's avowed object in setting out with the declaration of such a comprehensive moral principle, while fully aware that the specific enactments must be far more limited than such a principle would seem to authorize, and even to require. The object was, as he represented much at large, to give the utmost solemnity and sanction of legislative promulgation to a moral principle, in order to enforce it on the attention and the conscience of the people; and thus to carry its efficacy, by a purely moral operation, to an extent far beyond the reach of laws, which unavoidably must, from the peculiar nature of the subject, be constructed on a very narrow scale, and leave incomparably more of what belongs to that subject without, than they could take within, their cognizance.

Affecting again to acknowledge the claims of humanity in

behalf of brutes, Mr. Windham, instead of lending the assistance of his discriminating understanding to ascertain the extent of those claims, and to discuss, seriously, the question whether some of them might not be made effective in the shape of a law,—attempts to turn them into ridicule by a sort of sneer at Lord Erskine's bill for not going the length of prohibiting animal food. He then suddenly turns round on the remonstrants against cruelty with the question—"What is humanity?" as much as to say, that a little consideration would convict them of extreme silliness in having so precipitately declared against the "very general practice of buying up horses still alive, but not capable of being ever further abused by any kind of labour; and taking them in great numbers to slaughter-houses, not to be killed at once, but left without sustenance, and some of them literally starved to death, that the market might be gradually supplied; the poor animals in the meantime being reduced to eat their own dung, and frequently gnawing one another's manes in the agonies of hunger." In the view of such facts he, in the most pleasant humour imaginable, spouts such a question, as is enough of itself, without more ado, to make an end of the business. It was not that he did not know well that there exist many atrocious practices of which the one here described is but a fair specimen: but he knew also in what society he might, without being esteemed ever the worse, employ a mixture of jocularly and quibble to explode all such deliberation on such matters. The question "What is humanity?" is triumphantly repeated; and all the intellectual dexterity, which a mind really desirous of promoting it would have anxiously exerted in trying to fix a few plain practical distinctions and rules, is employed not in merely exposing, but aggravating the legislative difficulties of the subject. The orator's reasoning is, that humanity is not a thing capable of being defined by precise limits: that no regulations could be enacted, on any wide scale, which would not leave the generality of occurring cases very much to the discretion and arbitrary decision of some living tribunal: that this would be to "require men to live by an unknown rule," and to "make the condition of life uncertain, by exposing men to the operation of a law which they cannot know till it visits them in the shape of

punishment ;" and that while such a plan of government is extremely undesirable and dangerous in *all* cases, though in some few perhaps unavoidable; in the department of public regulation now in question, it would be peculiarly mischievous,—in consequence of the variable and capricious feelings by which the appointed authorities would be liable to be actuated in their estimates of humanity and cruelty,—in consequence of the impunity which would be enjoyed by the rich, and therefore by the judges themselves, generally of course persons of that class ("as few," our senator says, "would inform against his worship the 'squire, because he had ridden his hunter to death, or unmercifully whipped, or in a fit of passion shot, his pointer,")—and in consequence of the prodigious opening that would be given, under such a discretionary administration of justice, for the operation of all the selfish and malicious passions; for hypocrisy and the love of power. He expatiates with gloeful shrewdness on a passion which, he says, though not often adverted to, is at all times operating throughout the community with mighty force,—the love of tormenting. This passion most eagerly seizes on any thing that can give it a colour of concern for the public good.

"It is not to be told how eager it is when animated and sanctioned by the auxiliary motive of supposed zeal for the public service. It is childish for people to ask, what pleasure can any one have in tormenting others? None in the mere pain inflicted, but the greatest possible in the various effects which *may* accompany it,—in the parade of virtue and in the exercise of power. A man cannot torment another without a considerable exercise of power,—in itself a pretty strong and general passion. But if he can at once exercise his power and make a parade of his virtue (which will eminently be the case in the powers to be exercised under this law), the combination of the two forms a motive which we might fairly say, flesh and blood could not withstand. In what a state then should we put the lowest orders of people (for they were the only persons who would be affected), when we should let loose upon them such a principle of action, armed with such a weapon as this bill would put into its hands? All the fanatical views and feelings, all the little bustling spirit of regulation, all the private enmities and quarrels would be at work, in addition to those more general passions before stated, and men would be daily punished by summary jurisdiction, or left to wait in gaol for the meeting of a more

regular tribunal, for offences which are incapable of being defined, and which must be left therefore, to the arbitrary and fluctuating standard which the judge in either case might happen to carry in his breast."—P. 10.

Now, in the first place, it is not a little ludicrous, nor a little disgusting, to hear *this* gentleman affecting all this solicitude not to harass the people by a vague and sweeping mode of legislation, and extra-legal exertions of authority: *this* personage who, when *another* class of the faults of the community were in discussion, could so zealously abet the suspension of the Habeas Corpus—that is, virtually, a suspension of the whole benefits of law, both as to instruction and protection; who could so cheerfully co-operate to enact laws of the most inquisitorial and summary nature; and who could so self-complacently, when in power, avow that he and his associates were ready to "exert a vigour beyond the law."

In the next place, though there is a considerable portion of important truth in his representation, it is obviously truth stated all on one side, and stated with all possible exaggeration. It is the argument of an advocate defending the cause of a person accused, and with undeniable justice accused, of some of the cruel practices in question. For had he argued the subject in the impartial spirit required in a legislator, he would have admitted, or rather insisted, that many modes of cruelty to animals are sufficiently definable for specific enactment. Where for instance, should be the difficulty of defining the practice of which we have quoted the above description from Lord Erskine's speech? It would be easy to define many of the modes and degrees of cruelty so notorious in the system, as it has been called, of our coach travelling; modes and degrees in judging of which both the maker and the executor of the law would receive so much assistance from the very tangible circumstances of weight of vehicle and loading, and length of stage. There would be no very desperate perplexity in adjusting legal cognizance of what are called races against time, of the amusement of cock-fighting, or that of destroying cocks by tying them to a post and throwing sticks at them, of skinning eels alive, and several other very definable modes of cruelty.

The greater number, however, of the cruelties to which it is desirable to extend the power of the law, are probably such as the law could designate only in very general terms; many of them consisting in an excessive degree of infliction, or of a compulsion to labour, of which a smaller degree would not have been a cruelty—and many consisting in such combinations of circumstances as no law can specifically provide against. With respect, therefore, to the larger part of its intended operation, the law must be content to set forth, with the greatest possible publicity, a few general rules; and entrust the penal application of these principles in the particular instances, to a magistracy or court appointed for the purpose. Now there is no denying that to such an administration of the proposed law, the evils so urgently objected by our senator would in some degree be incident. There would be some opportunities afforded for the indulgence of a petty, consequential, interfering disposition, and for attempting to wreak, under a semblance of virtuous feeling, some of the resentments which are always existing, less or more, among neighbours, in every part of the country. The judges would, from their rank, be less liable to receive any deserved share of the vindictive application of the law than the class of persons most ordinarily arraigned before them. They would not, in deliberating and pronouncing, be able to divest themselves entirely of passion: and the judgments might in some very rare instances carry a greater degree of severity than the culprits had been aware they were exposing themselves to incur.

If the evil sought to be remedied were very slight; if it but consisted in some trifling injury to property, or if the alleged offences against humanity went no greater length than to hurt the affected sensibility which Mr. Windham ridicules so sarcastically in the fine ladies—a legislature might very properly hesitate to constitute such a jurisdiction. But the appeal may be made to all persons of real and sober sensibility, whether the evil in question be of so trifling an amount. Let any man who has been trained to habits of reflection and kindness, and has spent a considerable portion of his time in travelling or in great towns, try to collect all the instances of cruelty he has witnessed, or

heard related in places where they had recently occurred, during the last five or ten years : let him then consider how many thousand other persons in England have been witnessing each a different series of instances, during the same period : let the whole, if it were possible, be brought in imagination into one view:—all that has been perpetrated on animals in momentary fury ; in deliberate, ingenious revenge ; in the pure unprovoked love of tormenting ; in the barbarous carelessness of all feelings of want and pain with which animals are peculiarly regarded, after they are committed to those (generally hardened miscreants), whose business is to reserve or convey them for slaughter ; in the slow death of a compulsory labour far beyond any reasonable exertion of the animal's strength ; in the deficiency of needful sustenance, in some instances combined with this excess of labour ; and finally, in sanguinary sports, both vulgar and genteel. What an enormous mass of crime this collective view charges on the community, to stand to the final account of the individuals according to their degrees of participation !

This, however, is viewing only one part of the evil ; and so much crime, considered simply as against the suffering animals, is a sufficiently black account for a civilized and Christian country. But let one moment's thought be directed to the other part of the subject,—the effect of this mass of cruelty on the moral feelings of the people. No one worth consulting, it may be presumed, will make any question whether the feelings of a mind in a *proper* state, in beholding or thinking of these cruelties, would be pity and indignation, not unmingled with horror, in some cases of peculiar atrocity. But a great majority of the people of our nation, the poor and the rich, the vulgar and the polished, the insignificant and—excepting the House of Commons—the powerful, can observe and can hear of these things without any such feelings whatever. Now, what can be the cause of this insensibility, but our having been familiarized to the sight and perpetration of these cruelties, and our having always seen them under the sanction of legal impunity ?—since, probably, there is cultivation enough in this country to diffuse a tolerably general conviction of the odiousness of any one sort of flagrant wickedness, unless our

moral feelings have been depraved by its frequent perpetration, beheld or participated, and by its being suffered, as a thing too trifling for so serious a cognizance as that of the law of the land. It is clear, then, that the cruelty so prevalent in our country, and so very lightly thought of by the departed statesman, actually *has* a most hateful influence on our moral feelings; and it is a truth as obvious as it is serious, and as it is by governments disregarded, that, according to Lord Erskine's preamble, cruel and oppressive treatment of animals, is not only "highly unjust and immoral," as towards *them*, "but most pernicious in its *example*, having an evident tendency to harden the heart against the natural feelings of humanity." Doubtless "the evident native propensity of the human mind to cruelty leaves but half the existing hard-heartedness with respect to the sufferings of animals to the credit of example. But still, in order to avoid being compelled to consider human nature as essentially quite demoniac, we must ascribe much to *this* depraving source, when we see even persons of condition and cultivation—and who are observant of many of the proprieties of conduct—manifesting the most perfect insensibility at the sight, for many hours successively, of the shattered, feeble condition, the exhausting toil, and the pains of direct infliction, of the most generous, patient, and useful animals, thus suffering for the convenience, or perhaps by the direct order of these very persons: when we see a long succession of sets of post-horses, on the road to a fashionable watering-place, bathed in sweat and foam, panting and almost dying, before a massy carriage, that bears the most disgraceful decoration, as in such a case it is, of the splendidly emblazoned family arms, surmounted possibly with a coronet or even a mitre; when we hear of the horses all dropping down in the yard of the hotel, after bringing to the rendezvous of dissipation an individual of the first rank in the land; when we hear, as it has happened to us to hear, persons of the sacred profession ridiculing, as an extravagant sort of affectation of sensibility, a very soberly expressed commiseration of the habitual sufferings of our stage and hackney-coach horses; when we see that ~~pages~~ and ~~mamas~~, with the precious addition of aunts, cousins, and friends, will suffer children within their sight

to glut the native cruelty so justly ascribed to children by Dr. Johnson, with the sufferings of insects, young birds, or any little animals they dare torment, and will make you understand that you are rather impertinent to hunt the impropriety of such a permission, or to rescue one of the victims; and when we hear—to add but one count to an indictment that might with perfect justice be made twenty times as long—when we hear persons of all imaginable respectability, refinement, good breeding, and so forth, and who yesterday went over their prayer-book at church with the most edifying decorum—alleging perhaps some slight pretended difference in the delicacy of the appearance of the meat on their tables, as a quite sufficient argument against any method of causing the instantaneous death of the animal to be killed, by shooting through the head or otherwise: and this too in London—where the certain knowledge that on an average thousands of animals are slaughtered for food daily within a very few miles of any one of the habitations, might assist to aggravate in a reflective mind the idea of the comparatively protracted anguish suffered in the usual mode of slaughter; in London—of which good city, however, nearly *all* the people would at last suspect the legislature of insanity if it were possible it could be caught deliberating on an enactment to lessen, to reduce almost to nothing, this collective, enormous measure of anguish, by enforcing the most expeditious mode of causing death. We cannot contemplate this general barbarity of mind, showing itself in so many ways in this civilized land, without being constrained to attribute a considerable portion of it to the influence of that prevalent example which tends to destroy or rather preclude sensibility, not simply by making us familiar with the sight and practice of cruelty, but by also forming and fixing imperceptibly in our minds, a contemptuous estimate of the pains and pleasures of the brute animals; an estimate to which the law very powerfully contributes by its silence: it being almost impossible to make the popular mind connect any idea of very aggravated guilt with things of which, even in their greatest excess, the law takes no notice, if those things are of the substantial, tangible nature of actions. We are thus practically taught from our very infancy, that the pleasurable and painful sensations of animals are not worth

our care; that it is not of the smallest consequence what they are made to suffer, so that they are not rendered less serviceable to us by the suffering; that if we can even draw amusement from inflicting pain on them it is all very well; that in short they have *no rights* as sentient beings, existing for their own sakes as well as for ours. With respect then to one whole department of morality—and that too extending in contact with a very large part of the economy of life—the mind of the greater proportion of the people of this country is kept by a continual process in a state of ~~the~~ depravation, deficient by one whole class of indispensable moral sentiments. Thus depravation would constitute a dreadful amount of evil, even if the brute tribes were exclusively the objects of its operation. But how foolish it would be to imagine that this insensibility to the sufferings of brutes can fail to lessen the sympathy due to human beings. It will be sure to make its effect on the mind perceptible, in the little reluctance with which pain will be inflicted on *them*, and in a very light account of the evils to which they may be doomed. So long as Mr. Windham is remembered, it will not be forgotten with what easy coolness he could talk in the senate of our troops on the Continent, being "*killed off*." If instances were pretended to be cited of persons who are habitually unfeeling or actively cruel towards animals, being notwithstanding kind to their relatives, neighbours, and friends, we should ask very confidently whether whim and caprice be not visibly prevalent amidst that kindness—whether it may not be perceived to be uniformly subordinate to a decided selfishness—and whether slight causes are not enough to convert it into resentment and violence. We have not the smallest faith in the benevolence or friendship of a man who, in a journey to see his friends or nearest relatives (if they not dangerously ill or in any other extremity), will pair of jaded post-horses forced to their utmost speed, whip and spur to the same painful exertion as a hack, or a hard-worked animal of his own, just to reach friends, as he calls them, an hour or two the sooner.

Unless a somewhat comprehensive view is taken of the evil as it is actually existing under these several forms,—a vast and diversified portion of suffering needlessly and often

wantonly inflicted—a dreadful measure of crime in some sense *sanctioned*—and a hardening operation on the moral feelings—a man can have no just idea of the strength of the reasons for which the friends of humanity wish for some such interposition of authority as this speech was made to prevent; and he may let Mr. Windham persuade him that the evil, existing indeed in no very serious degree in this country (for so the orator had the hardihood to represent), is not of a kind to make it worth while to encounter the difficulties incident to the execution of a law for its repression. But those difficulties will probably appear to form very insufficient arguments against making at least a *trial* of such a law, to a man of enlarged benevolence even, though of less than poetic sensibility, if he takes an extensive view of the cruelties of which *he* will easily verify the existence.

One of the chief of those arguments is, from the exceptionable character of a discretionary jurisdiction. It is, however, observed expressly by himself, that “such jurisdictions must of necessity perhaps exist in many cases, and, where the necessity can be shown, must be submitted to,”—though, as he justly adds, “they are not on that account the less, to be deprecated, or more fit to be adopted where their establishment must be matter of choice,” (p. 14). Now, a very humane man may be allowed to think that if the class of crimes in question cannot be brought under the coercion requisite to prevent or punish without such a jurisdiction, there cannot be “many cases” in which a stronger necessity can be proved. And let it be considered that the magistracy appointed for the purpose would have a province which, taken in the whole, would be far more defined than that of almost any other constituted authority; its peculiar nature marking it off so distinctly from all other departments and subjects of jurisdiction. While, therefore, there might be *within* this department various difficulties of discrimination, and consequently some errors committed, those difficulties and errors would inconveniently affect the community only to a certain very limited length: the tribunal for cruelty to animals would have nothing to do, for instance, with *Jacobinism*—with charges or questions about which Mr. Windham was peculiarly anxious that the good people of England should never be harassed. These

tribunals would in their commencement, it may be presumed, proceed with solicitous deliberation; and thus a number of well-judged decisions would become at once a useful precedent to themselves, and a promulgation to the people of the rules intended to be observed in such cases as the law could not have specifically provided for: so that a little time would do away with a considerable part of the evil represented by Mr. Windham as an inseparable attendant, and justly deprecated so far as it is an inseparable attendant, on the discretionary application of a general law—that is, its “requiring men to live by an unknown rule,” and “inflicting pains and penalties upon conditions which no man is able previously to ascertain.” A short series of the proclaimed and compared adjudgments of a few of the tribunals, might easily give the people at the very least as settled a standard of the degrees and penalties of this class of offences, as that with which they are furnished respecting the various other classes by our criminal code; a code of which so vast a proportion of the enactments are considered by the authorities administering the law, as totally unfit to be enforced—and which therefore leaves so very large a part of the general administration of justice to be purely an exercise of that very discretion which the orator affects so much to dread. It is obvious, too, that the danger which in relation to this one subject he insists on so much,—of the judges being influenced by passion, may just as properly be urged against that exceedingly wide and unquestioned discretion in our criminal courts. But the danger of the judges being impelled by passion to decisions of excessive severity, will appear exceedingly small when the very low general state of our moral sentiments regarding the sufferings of animals is taken into account; even cultivated men, as we have seen, often betraying a strange want of sensibility on this point. Indeed Mr. Windham himself, in another part of the speech, represents that if it were not so, the desired reform might be effected without the interference of the legislature. Unless it were to be expected that our English gentlemen, as soon as they felt themselves invested with their new office should melt into a most unwonted kind of sympathy, the probability would be that the offenders cited before them might escape somewhat too easily; and

that, speaking generally, the judges would only become adequately severe through an enlargement of their virtuous feelings, which would at the same time make them anxious to be just in that severity.

It is not to be denied that the appointed courts or magistrates would have occasion for their utmost discrimination to ascertain the true nature of the acts charged before them—to distinguish wanton cruelty from impositions, or inflictions necessitated by unavoidable circumstances—to obtain proof *who* is the real or chief offender—and to discern when an accuser may be guilty of malicious misrepresentation. But Lord Erskine has shown that all this is perfectly analogous to what forms a very large share of the ordinary business of the courts of law, in which the prosecutions for cruel treatment of apprentices, for assaults, for slander, for trespasses, &c. &c., involve exactly the same sort of difficulties. He will not, indeed, allow them to be called difficulties; declaring for himself, with an appeal to the experience also of his learned brethren, that he has known hardly any causes of this nature in which the truth did not very soon make itself palpable to the court. And, since in the course of so many causes, perplexity, fallacy, and malice, under all their imaginable modes, have generally failed to embarrass the court for any long time, it is very reasonably inferred that in cases of alleged cruelty to animals it cannot generally be impossible to ascertain the truth. To be sure, the keenness of Westminster Hall cannot be spread all over the country, and conferred on each magistrate along with his patent of office: but it must not be conceded to Mr. Windham's implied judgment of the faculties of our English gentlemen, that they would not be able, with the accuser, the accused, and the witnesses before them in open daylight—and very often before dinner—to make a tolerable estimate of the characters and the statements; when they had looks, tones, narratives, replies to all the questions they chose to put, sometimes the injured animals, and often the known characters of the persons, all placed fairly in their view. A very few exposed and stigmatized instances of malicious accusation, or purely impertinent, consequential interference, would go far towards putting an end to that kind of injustice; as none but the most worthless persons in a

neighbourhood, persons who may be easily *known* for such, would be willing to expose themselves to be convicted of it. With Lord Erskine, therefore, we think that on the whole the proposed law is "more open to the charge of inefficacy than of vexation."

But the objection on which the most zealous part of Mr. Windham's oratory is employed, is the iniquitous distinction which, he asserts, any law of the kind would practically make, and which the law, as laid down in the proposed bill, does formally make, between the rich and the poor. It was perfectly in character that on this topic our statesman should take fire; and on the present occasion it burns so fiercely as to threaten the whole constitution of parliament: for his Speech declares, that though he had been, from conviction, a steady opponent of parliamentary reform, the passing of the proposed law would be enough to reverse all his opinions, and decide him for a grand change in the constitution of the House of Commons. Part of this inequality which he predicts in the operation of the law, is the failure of its execution against the rich in cases strictly analogous to those in which it would be executed against the lower orders. Now though it is truly an odious thing in a community, that the rich should be tolerated in vices which are punished in the poor, yet a moralist may be allowed to wish that the atrocious vices may be extirpated from among the poor, even though the rich should resolve, as their own peculiar privilege, to retain them. And, since jurisdiction must always be substantially in the hands of the more wealthy class, we would rather, upon the whole, that the very "squire," who last week, "rode his hunter to death" in a fox-chase, and on whom, notwithstanding, the law against cruelty would, according to Mr. Windham, fail to be executed, should be the magistrate to punish a man of the "lower orders" for forcing a poor debilitated horse along with a cart-load of stones of double the reasonable weight, till it falls down and can rise no more,—than that this and other similar barbarians should be allowed to do this again. What would become of law and justice in general, if we were to be nice about the characters of thief-takers and executioners? It might, indeed, be hoped, one should think, that some few "squires" might be found in the different parts of England,

who do *not* ride their hunters to death, and who, if in office, would be found to have the temerity to execute the law against those 'squires that do. It might also be thought not totally romantic, especially in humble innocents like us, unacquainted with the wealthy and the genteel people of the land, to hope that the 'squire, who has probably been educated at the university, and has the clergyman to dine with him every week, would, when invested with a commission to enforce authoritatively among his neighbours, both a specific rule and a general *principle* against cruelty—bethink himself of the propriety of not perpetrating notorious cruelties himself, in the form of either riding his hunter, or causing a pair of post-horses to be driven to death. But still, if such surmises and hopes are founded in a perfect ignorance of the character of the wealthy, polished, college-bred gentlemen of this country; if we *must* be compelled to accept Mr. Windham's implied estimate of them; and if, therefore, it would be in vain to seek for any of them to be constituted magistrates to take cognizance of cruelty who would not perpetrate the grossest cruelties themselves,—still even though all this were so, we would rather that only one cruelty should be committed than that ten should; and would allow the wealthy and cultivated men to commit one, as a reward for the exercise of their humanity in preventing the other nine.

It is at the same time extremely mortifying to patriotic feelings of a better kind than those of mere English pride, to have from so acute an observer, and so indulgent a moralist as Mr. Windham, such a testimony against the humanity of the more cultivated class of our countrymen and countrywomen, as is conveyed in the substance of this speech. The orator most pointedly insists that if they really had any tolerable share of the humanity to which it is pretended this law is designed to give efficacy, they might give it efficacy without the assistance of such a law. And in exculpation of the immediate agents of cruelty, such post-boys, and even the proprietors of post-horses, he drives home the charge—a charge of much severer quality, in fact, than there are any expressions to indicate it was in his opinion—to the superior agent and criminal, "his honour," for whose sake the cruelty is committed.

"Whose fault is it, in nineteen cases out of twenty, that these sufferings are incurred? The traveller drives up in haste, his servant having half-killed one post-horse in riding forward to announce his approach. The horses are brought out; they are weak, spavined, galled, hardly dry from their last stage. What is the dialogue that ensues? Does the traveller offer to stop on his journey, or even to wait till the horses can be refreshed? Such a thought never enters his head; he swears at the landlord and threatens never to come again to his house, because he expects to go only seven miles an hour, when he had hoped to go nine. But when the landlord has assured him that the horses, however bad in their appearance, will carry his honour very well, and has directed the 'lads' to 'make the best of their way,' the traveller's humanity is satisfied, and he hears with perfect composure and complacency the cracking whips of the postillions only intimating to them, by-the-bye, that if they do not bring him in in time, they shall not receive a farthing."—P. 21.

This supposed instance was undoubtedly meant and considered by Mr. Windham as a fair sample of the humane feelings prevailing in that part of society of which the individuals are of consequence enough to be preceded and announced in their movements, by servants on horses "half-killed" to execute the important office; and it is mortifying to be compelled to acknowledge that whatever else be ascribed or denied to Mr. Windham, it would be ridiculous to question his knowledge of the world. But it is really very curious that such a description should form part of a serious argument against a law for the prevention of cruelty. How does he apply such a fact to such a purpose? It is thus. He is representing that "those persons of the lower orders" who would most commonly be found the immediate perpetrators of cruelty, especially of the kind here described, are very much at the will of their betters, such as "his honour," and actually commit much of the alleged cruelty at their authoritative dictate; and that, therefore, if "his honour," and such as "his honour," chose to alter their will and dictates in this matter, they could, without any interference of the law, prevent that cruelty. Why yes; and, with submission, it may perhaps be questioned whether the necessity of a law in any case whatever is not owing precisely to the circumstance that people have not the will to do right without it. "His honour" is evidently not disposed to save the legislature the odium

and the pain of exerting their power—a power so rarely and reluctantly exerted—of enacting one more restrictive and penal statute. “But then,” says Mr. Windham “since ‘his honour,’ is in this case the real *cause* of the cruelty (while yet, not being the direct perpetrator, he cannot be touched by the law), you will commit a flagrant injustice in making a law to punish the landlord and the post-boy.” To this it must be replied, that without a law directed against the landlord and post-boy, we cannot, according to Mr. Windham’s own statement of the case, reach “his honour,” to put a restraint on his detestable barbarity; and that by means of such a law we can put that restraint. For if the landlord has just received an authenticated copy of a heavy penal statute against cruelties like those here described, he will be very certain not to suffer the poor horses under such circumstances, to be goaded out of his stable, however “his honour” may storm and “swear.” And if this important gentleman, baronet, or lord, as the case may be, should threaten to go to another inn, the landlord will laugh, and tell him that the statute is probably in equal force at the other inn. And also when the “lads” set off, the landlord will warn them that it is at their peril they take their consequential luggage at any such rate as “nine miles an hour,” in whatever style the said luggage may command, growl, or threaten. As to his threatening them with “not a farthing,” it is obvious that one point to be provided for in the proposed legal regulation would be that, at any rate the *whole* of their reward should not depend on the choice of the traveller who would proportion its degree upward exactly to the degree of cruelty. We should think the proprietor of the horses would be exceedingly glad of this statute, as the best protection of himself and his horses against the imperative insolence of such persons as “his honour.” If he has retained the very slightest sentiment of what we, by courtesy to our nature, are pleased to call humanity, or if he has any reasonable care of the animals, even as mere working machines, which it cannot be good policy, as to his own pecuniary interest, to work down and destroy so fast, he will be happy to plead the inhibition of this statute; if he can be so perverse a wretch as to be indifferent at once to the sufferings of the animals and the calculation of his own advantage, he will *deserve* to stand the

sole respondent, for all the cruelty committed between the traveller and the post-boy, and to suffer the utmost punishment awarded by the law. To notice again that one landlord would have no inducement to comply with the unreasonable demands of travellers on the ground of competition of interests with other landlords, whom our orator's argument supposes ready to give the barbarous accommodation which this one might refuse, would be very superfluous but for the gross unfairness, as to this point, of the passage we have quoted—and of another (p. 18), in which the traveller is represented as "hinting to the post-boy that he means to dine at the next stage, and that if he does not bring him in in time, he will never go to his master's house again." The acute maker of this speech saw clearly, that his threatened transfer of custom from one proprietor of post-horses to another, was the essential basis of his argument against the application of a penal law to that proprietor. His interest, our orator argues, necessitates him to be servile and cruel, since by disobliging the traveller he would lose employment—the traveller instantly and ever after going to another inn, where no such humane regulation will retard him. Now what words can do justice to the mockery of maintaining an apparently serious argument on a ground so palpably taken from under the reasoner by the nature of the case? It being unavoidably present to his thoughts at the time, and it having been put in the most pointed form of words in Lord Erskine's printed speech, that such competition and transfers must be precluded by a law known to be equally restrictive on all the owners of post-horses. Can there be two places in England where a man could talk in this way without laughing out at his audience for gravely listening to him.

In prosecuting his argument, that people of wealth and rank might, if they pleased, do much without the assistance of law, for the prevention of cruelty, the orator bestows some poignant sarcasms on hypocritical pretensions to sensibility; and he will be cheered with animation by those who are in earnest for that prevention, at each vindictive sentence applied to such personages as those described in the following passages:—

"One of the favourite instances [in exemplification of cruelty] in the fashionable female circles, as they are called, of this town,

(and who appear, by-the-bye, to have been very diligently canvassed), are the cases with which the members of these societies have been continually shocked, of coachmen whipping their horses in public places; one instance, by the way, by no means of magnitude enough to call for the interference of the legislature. But be its magnitude what it will, why must the legislature be called in? Are there no means (sufficient probably for punishing the offence adequately in each instance, but certainly for preventing the practice) in the power possessed by masters and mistresses? But apply to any of these ladies, and satisfy them, after much difficulty, that *their* coachman was the most active and the most in the wrong, in the struggle which caused so much disturbance at the last Opera, and the answer probably would be: 'Oh! to be sure it is very shocking; but then John is so clever in a crowd! the other night at Lady Such-a-one's, when all the world were perishing in the passage, waiting for their carriages, ours was up in an instant, and we were at Mrs. Such-a-one's half an hour before any one else. We should not know what to do if we were to part with him.' Was it the coachman here who most deserved punishment, or was it for the parties here described to call for a law?"—P. 19.

In an assembly of confessedly unequalled rank in point of integrity, there evidently could not be a more effectual way for putting a question in a train for speedy decision, than by stating it so that the decision as on the one side or on the other, shall appear to be identical with the honesty or the hypocrisy of that assembly. Our orator therefore has put his grand objection against the law as proposed by Lord Erskine,—its making an invidious and iniquitous distinction between the higher and lower orders, into this *argumentum ad hominem* form. The bill, he represents to the assembly, not merely proposes certain specific laws against certain specified modes of cruelty, but promulgates a grand abstract principle against cruelty to animals in general. Well: what are usually called sports, such as hunting, shooting, and fishing, are as decidedly of the nature of cruelty as anything in the world can be, and therefore "cannot, one should think (we are using his own words) be allowed an instant; as being, more than any others, in the very line and point-blank aim of the statute, and having nothing to protect them but that which ought in justice and decency to be the strongest reason against them; namely, that they are the mere sports of the rich."

But, behold! this bill, founding itself, and taking to itself the highest credit for being founded, on this grand general principle, leaves and sanctions the rich in the most perfect possession of all these cruel sports. And who is it that is to pass this bill into a law? "Why," says he, "a house of hunters and shooters:" and after suggesting to them what a fine figure their legislation would make in the world, when the newspapers should come to record in one column a string of commitments under the "Cruelty Bill," and in another, all the savage incidents of a desperate chase, under the head of "Sporting Intelligence," he exclaims:—

"Was it possible that men could stand the shame of such statements,—that this house which tolerated such sports, nay, which claimed them, as the peculiar privilege of the class to which it belonged, a house of hunters and shooters, should, while they left these untouched, be affecting to take the brute creation under their protection; and be passing bills for the punishment of every carter or driver whom an angry passenger should accuse of chastising his horses with over-severity." "It was in vain to attempt to disguise the fact, that if, with such a preamble (as Lord Erskine's) on our statutes, and with acts passed in consequence to punish the lower classes for any cruelty inflicted upon animals, we continued to practice and to reserve in a great measure to ourselves the sports of hunting, shooting, and fishing, we must exhibit ourselves as the most hardened and unblushing hypocrites that ever shocked the feelings of mankind." Pp. 25, 26.

With great dexterity and success this assailant of the new scheme of legislation cuts away the line of distinction by which Lord Erskine had endeavoured to save the decorum of the legislature, while it should be excluding a large proportion of the animal tribes from the protection of a bill professing to proceed on a *general* principle of humanity, by calling those excluded animals the "unreclaimed," or *feræ naturæ*. "Why," says Mr. Windham, "because they did not ask man's protection, were they to be liable in consequence to be persecuted and tormented by him? On the contrary, if he did nothing for their good, he ought the rather to be required to do nothing for their harm." It was, in truth, a matter of no small perplexity, in proposing a solemn legislative recognition of a principle

condemning cruelty to animals in general, to explain to the persons who were to make this recognition, how they might do it in perfect consistency with the retention of a legal right to seek *sport* in the infliction of pain. Perhaps on this part of the subject the mover of the bill was less fully prepared than on the other parts, to meet that extreme moral scrupulosity which he could not be unaware he should find awake to every point of consistency. We really do not see how the proposition could be better introduced than in some such manner as the following: "There is a great deal of cruelty exercised on brute animals in this country, which we certainly have the power in some degree to prevent; and I will endeavour to show that it is therefore our duty to do so. If, however, we adopt a formal measure on the subject, the assertion of something in the form of a general principle condemnatory of cruelty, seems highly proper as the basis of any particular enactments, and may also be useful by exciting thought and impressing the moral sense. Then, as to the particular enactments, let us try how many we can agree upon. You and I know very well that the pursuits of the sportsman are extremely cruel; but you and I also know very well that it would be utterly in vain for me to propose to this assembly any restrictions on those sports. I am sorry for the appearance of inconsistency that will arise from this exception, especially as it is an exception made so insidiously in your own favour. But in a matter so urgent, it is better that something should be done, with whatever defects or inconsistency, than that nothing should. I think the enormous sum of pain that may be prevented by such regulations as we probably might concur to make, a far more important consideration, than the uniformity of the character of our legislation. Retain, if it must be so, your asserted right and your practice of hunting, shooting, and fishing; but pray do not go to fancy it an indispensable point of beneficence to the people, to secure to *them* also an inviolable unlimited privilege to be cruel, in another way."

It remains only to make one slight observation on the sort of consistency so carefully maintained in this Speech between the professions of regret for the sufferings of animals, and certain other professions. Near the beginning

of this article, we called these compassionate professions *cant*—whether justly or not, will appear immediately. After adverting to Lord Erskine's melancholy exhibition of cruelties and victims, (an exhibition in a great measure confined to horses, asses, and cattle, appointed for slaughter,) our orator, as we have seen, most strenuously insists, that the cruelties perpetrated by the vulgar on these animals are equalled, if not exceeded, by those that take place in the aristocratic amusements of hunting, &c. &c. Of course the senator expects it to be understood that he regrets also the sufferings of the victims of these amusements. But lest there should be the possibility of a doubt as to his feelings in this case, he takes care to say that,—

“He *begged* not to be understood as *condemning* the sports to which he had been alluding, and *much less* as charging with cruelty all those who took delight in them, cruel as the acts themselves undoubtedly were.” “Though no sportsman himself, he should lament the day, should it ever arrive, when from false refinement and mistaken humanity, what are called field-sports (or sports indeed of almost *any* kind) should be abolished in this country, or fall into disuse. So far from arraigning those who followed them, his doctrine had ever been, that strange as it might seem, *cruel sports did not make cruel people*.”—P. 27.

We are, if possible, more pleased than even any of our readers will be, to have reached the end of these observations. Nothing could have made us feel it pardonable to extend them so disproportionately, and so very far beyond the first intention, but the notorious fact, that the important branch of morality to which they relate, is not only disregarded in practice, by numberless reputable sort of members of the community, but also very criminally neglected in the instruction of parents, tutors, and preachers. It seemed worth while to examine a little, how far the persons so practising, and so neglecting, would do wisely to seek to draw anything like sanction or extenuation from the opinions of the departed senator, or the decisions of the assembly in which this speech purports to have been delivered.

SOUTHEY'S CURSE OF KEHAMA.

The Curse of Kehama. By ROBERT SOUTHEY. 4to. 1811.

In endeavouring to come as near as we can to a right judgment on this performance, it will perhaps be best to let a brief abstract of the story precede the substance of the remarks we may venture to make. If they should happen to intermingle with this analysis more than we at present intend, we shall only be so much the less tedious in the latter part of the article.

It may first be noticed, that the *time* in which the events forming the action of the poem took place, is not brought within the reach of conjecture, by any circumstances bearing a relation to any known period of history. The action bursts on us without introduction or preparation, proceeds in perfect disconnexion from all contemporary agency, and in a moment shuts up, in a manner that not only does not leave a possibility of guessing at a sequel, but gives the impression that there can *be* no sequel. The magnificent and monstrous fable comes up to our view and goes down again, just after the manner of one of those temporary islands, which have been sometimes thrown up by submarine volcanoes, and having risen with tremendous violence and fulmination, and exhibited a fiery and portentous appearance for a short time, have sunk at once, and left all the space mere sea, as it was before. Indeed the story, though consisting, for perhaps the greater part, in a representation of human action and feelings, is so perfectly foreign to any thing actually and simply human, that there would have been absurdity in affecting to connect it with real events, and to give it a place in chronology. It is enough for the reader to be certain as to the two extreme dates of the period, somewhere in which these matters happened. The crimes and miseries here described, are evidence that the transactions related must have taken place within the *Caliyuga*, the fourth or iron age of the Hindoos, which commenced about five thousand years ago; and it should be equally evident, we think, that they cannot have taken place so lately as the middle of the last century; certainly not since

the battle of Plassey; because it is impossible that such a person as Kehama should have been in India at that time, without coming in collision with Colonel Clive, who would have saved Seeva the trouble of interfering to put him down.

The poem opens with a grand funeral procession through the streets of the "imperial city," supposed to be in some part of Hindostan, and the capital of the dominions of Kehama, who bears the apparently inadequate denomination of "Rajah." It was the funeral of Arvalan, his son, who, in attempting violence to the beautiful and virtuous daughter of a peasant, had been struck dead at one blow, inflicted in the agony of desperation by her father. The procession which conveys and attends the dead miscreant to the pile prepared without the city, is very long, is in the night, has the gloomy splendour of an almost infinite number of torches, roars and clatters with a dreadful noise of all manner of vociferation, from the whole vast multitude combined with all big-sounding instruments, and is described with eminent vigour of conception and language; an effectual hint of which may be given, by citing the lines descriptive of the appearance of the dead prince.

"In vain ye thunder on his ear the name!

Would ye awake the dead?

Borne upright in his palankeen,

There Arvalan is seen!

A glow is on his face,—a lively red;

It is the crimson canopy

Which o'er his cheek the reddening shade hath shed.

He moves,—he nods his head,—

But the motion comes from the bearers' tread;

As the body, borne aloft in state,

Sways with the impulse of its own dead weight."—P. 4.

Kehama comes in view, for the first time, following immediately his dead son, but not calling his name, nor joining the funeral song. With great propriety he is made to be silent, abstracted from the tumult, pomp, and thundering clamour, and grimly occupied with his own thoughts; while the beholders were secretly gratified to see their tyrant a sufferer, and not one person in all the prodigious multitude really lamented the fate of his son. After him comes the

two wives of Arvalan, "young Azla," and "young Nealliny," prepared, the one voluntarily, the other by constraint, to share with him the burning pile. They are attended by their relations, and followed by a train of richly decorated slaves, the appointed victims of the same fire. The two persons that come next, guarded by bowmen, are the objects of most extreme curiosity, and the only objects of sympathy, to the spectators. These are the peasant and his daughter, named, in a taste sufficiently odd, Ladurlad and Kailyal. The procession, reaches the bank of the river; the bier is set down near the funeral pile, which is built of sandal-wood, and bestrewed with myrrh and ambergris; the music and outcry cease; a ceremony is performed in the way of ascertaining that the body is really dead; it is absolutely dead; then

— "With a doubling peal and deeper blast
The tambours and the trumpets sound on high,
And with a last and loudest cry
They call on Arvalan."

Azla calmly takes her seat on the funeral pile, and sustains the head of Arvalan in her lap: Nealliny, who has not yet been one month a bride, is forced to the fatal situation, and bound to the dead man, in spite of her struggles, the desperate agony of which is described with a frightful vividness. Kehama's torch, followed by those of the Brahmins, sets fire to the pile, which is built in a kind of pit, so as to be below the level of the ground; the band of victims join in a frantic dance round it, and one by one fall into the devouring flames. The clamour and instruments of the furious rout at length sink into silence, and leaving the roaring of the fire alone to be heard.

Amidst this stillness, more hideous than even the preceding tempest of noise and madness, Kehama performs alone, some funeral rights, and calls on his son. Unexpectedly Arvalan answers and appears to him, but in such a manner as to be unheard and unseen by any one else. They hold a mournful and infernal dialogue. The son expostulates upbraidingly with his father, whom the poet makes him call "Almighty," for not having performed something of more value to his expelled and unhappy spirit, than this vain

funeral pomp. Kehama retorts in anger, reproaching him for the folly of contriving to lose, by means of a stake and a peasant's arm, a life which had been "spell-secured" against disease, fire, and sword. The son answers in deep complaints of misery, and implores his father to exert his irresistible influence to invest his sensitive spirit with a security against the malignant impressions of the elements, to fix him in a favourable condition in defiance of the gods, to endow him with power, and to give him the gratification of witnessing a fearful revenge—of which delight Kehama promises him he shall have his fill.

"So as he spake, a glow of dreadful pride
Inflamed his cheek,—with quick and angry stride
He moved toward the pile,
And raised his hand to hush the crowd, and cried,
Bring forth the murderer!"—P. 15.

Ladurlad comes forward obedient to the call. But Kailyal seizes and clings to a wooden image of Marriataly, the favourite Hindoo goddess of the poor, grappling with such almost preternatural force, that the guards cannot drag her from it. And here comes a piece of gross impiety. The Christian poet (unless the appellation is really meant to be disclaimed) formally and seriously puts himself in the attitude of a devout Pagan, and in his own person apostrophizes this member of the Indian pantheon, in language of reverence and kindness.

"Didst thou, O Marriataly, see their strife?
In pity didst thou see the suffering maid?
Or was thine anger kindled, that rude hands
Assailed thy holy image?—for behold
The holy image shakes!"—P. 16.

The bank of the river, where this deadly struggle is maintained, gives way; and the idol, and its *protegée*, and her savage assailants, are all flung into the deep stream. Ladurlad remains to receive the concentrated wrath of the "Man-Almighty," as Kehama is gravely styled—not now by Arvalan, who might be supposed thus to apply the title of divinity consistently with his Pagan principles, but by the poet himself, with a scandalous acceptance of those prin-

ciples. Having stood fixed for some time, in silence, and with total disregard to the few pathetic expressions by which the victim implores lenity, the tyrant pronounces a curse, in the following terms :—

“ I charm thy life
 From the weapons of strife,
 From stone and from wood,
 From fire and from flood,
 From the serpent's tooth,
 And the beasts of blood :
 From Sickness I charm thee,
 And Time shall not harm thee ;
 But Earth which is mine
 Its fruits shall deny thee ;
 And Water shall hear me,
 And know thee and fly thee ;
 And the Winds shall not touch thee
 When they pass by thee,
 And the dews shall not wet thee,
 When they fall nigh thee :
 And thou shalt seek Death
 To release thee in vain ;
 Thou shalt live in thy pain,
 While Kehama shall reign
 With a fire in thy heart,
 And a fire in thy brain ;
 And Sleep shall obey me,
 And visit thee never,
 And the Curse shall be on thee
 For ever and ever.”—Pp. 18, 19.

The incongruity between the cantering, jingling versification of this anathema, and its formidable import, and still more the portentous aspect and dreadful attributed power of the personage who utters it, is too obvious to require remark.

An instantaneous shock through the frame and soul of Ladurial evinces the efficacy of the curse. He remains awhile fixed to the spot, in a state of mind partaking both of stupefaction and dreadful consciousness ; but the spectacle will be best exhibited in the poet's own exquisitely descriptive lines :—

“ There, where the Curse had stricken him,
 There stood the miserable man,

There stood Ladurlad, with loose-hanging arms,
 And eyes of idiot wandering.
 Was it a dream ? alas !
 He heard the river flow,
 He heard the crumbling of the pile,
 He heard the wind which showered
 The thin white ashes round.
 There motionless he stood,
 As if he hoped it were a dream,
 And feared to move, lest he should prove
 The actual misery ;
 And still at times he met Kehama's eye,
 Kehama's eye that fastened on him still."—P. 19.

We have made this quotation, partly in order to take an occasion (which, however, there are a great number of passages in the work that would equally, and some of them still more pointedly, have afforded), of noticing two things in which no poet surpasses Mr. Southey. One is, the introduction of circumstances which, while slight in themselves, are adapted to give the reader a lively impression of reality in the situations created by the poet—marking even the less obvious of the perceptions by which that reality is evinced to the persons represented as in those situations. This is happily done, in the present instance, by the sound of "the crumbling of the pile," and the "showering round of the white ashes." This kind of beauty, recurring frequently, as it does throughout Mr. Southey's poetry, shows an imagination in which all the ideas that are nearly related are strongly associated. The other excellence is, that he conceives in its most specific form, and perfectly expresses in few words, the state of feeling appropriate to any imagined situation. We are content to cite as an instance, though the poem contains many more perfect ones, the passage near the end of the above extract—

"And feared to move, lest he should prove
 The actual misery."

From this state Ladurlad is roused, by the recommencing noise of the funeral orgies. He moves away from the spot, unobstructed, for the crowd everywhere shrinks from around him with horror; and as he recovers from his amazement, his consciousness the more perfectly verifies the full reality

and weight of the curse. But it is time to notice, that the poet gives us the hint, even by a motto in the title-page, that Kehnana has rather *taken himself in* by pronouncing this curse; and in the course of the narrative it is made to confer many unthought-of advantages on the victim, amidst his misery, and recoils with vindictive operation on its author. Its first effect in Ladurlad's favour is, that, water being harmless to him, he easily rescues his daughter, whom he decries floating down the river, clinging, in a state of insensibility, to the wooden idol. The scene that follows, displaying the wild exultation that for a few moments beguiles his misery, the appearance of his insensible daughter, his efforts to recover her, her gradual restoration to consciousness, her expressions of surprise and congratulation at finding her father alive and free, his hasty movement of impatience and anguish at hearing them, and the manner in which she is affected by the speedy and unquestionable proof of his dreadful calamity—is in all respects eminently beautiful. Its exquisite tenderness, and its most accurate and lively painting, make the reader almost insensible, for the time, to the anti-pathetic influence, if we may so call it, of the absurd leading principle of the fable. The same powerful conception of an uncommon state of feeling, and the same rich delineation of the visible circumstances of the scene, prevail through the next portion of the narrative, which describes the two sufferers lying on the ground almost all the day, absorbed and almost immoveable in misery. As a piece of evening devotion, Kailyal erects and worships the idol goddess; and the poet appears to help her in this service with all imaginable cordiality, expatiating for her in grateful and pathetic terms on the benignity of this heathen deity. Kailyal's devotion, however, does not amount to a persuasion that it will be of any use to remain in the neighbourhood of her idol; and, though it is night, she leads her father to wander away, at the direction of chance, hopeless of all relief, and careless of the danger indicated by well-understood signs of the recent ravages of tigers. His torment becomes more intense as he recovers the perfect possession of his thoughts and consciousness, and as the experimental proofs accumulate, which verify, progressively, the reality and extent of the curse. At length they recline against the

root of a tree, Ladurlad making a most resolute effort, for his daughter's sake, to repress the outward signs of his misery; and she fondly but fearfully wishing to attribute his stillness to a mitigation of his sufferings, permitting the short oblivion of sleep. Through complete exhaustion, she sinks into an uneasy slumber, which her father perceives; and, anxious not to oppress her with the sight of his hopeless misery, and aggravate it to himself by seeing her made a constant sharer, by being a witness of it, gently withdraws from her, and, on gaining a little distance, runs impetuously away. She awakes—vainly calls after him—and with the impulse of agony rushes forward in the direction in which she believes him gone; but a temporary cloud of extraordinary density, sometimes experienced in the East, has made the night so utterly dark that she cannot see the ground, and is stopped violently by the bough of a tree: she leans on it in a state of overwhelming misery. All this is told and described in a manner so exquisitely pathetic, with so deep a knowledge of the human passions, and with such a striking prominence of all the images, as still completely to overpower the effect of the reader's sense of the absurdity of a representation of sufferings from an impossible cause. The scene that immediately follows, in vigour of conception, and the power of giving by words such features and aspects to imaginary objects, as almost to make us expect we shall immediately have them glaring on our eyes, surpasses our previous estimate of the force of even Mr. Southey's genius. Kailyal is leaning against the tree in anguish, and in perfect darkness.

“ ’Twas like a dream of horror, and she stood
 Half doubting whether all indeed were true.
 A tiger's howl, loud echoing through the wood,
 Roused her; the dreadful sound she knew,
 And turned instinctively to what she feared.
 Far off the tiger's hungry howl was heard;
 A nearer horror met the maiden's view,
 For right before her a dim form appeared,
 A human form in that black night,
 Distinctly shaped by its own lurid light,
 Such light as the sickly moon is seen to shed
 Through spell-rai'd fogs, a bloody baleful red.

"That Spectre fixed his eyes upon her full,
 The light which shone in their accursed orbe
 Was like a light from hell,
 And it grew deeper, kindling with the view.
 She could not turn her sight
 From that infernal gaze, which like a spell
 Bound her, and held her rooted to the ground.
 It palsied every power !
 Her limbs availed her not in that dread hour.
 There was no moving thence ;
 Thought, memory, sense, were gone ;
 She heard not now the tiger's nearer cry,
 She thought not on her father now,
 Her cold heart's blood ran back,
 Her hand lay senseless on the bough it clasped,
 Her feet were motionless ;
 Her fascinated eyes
 Like the stone eyeballs of a statue fixed,
 Yet conscious of the sight that blasted them.

 "The wind is abroad,
 It opens the clouds ;
 Scattered before the gale,
 They skurry through the sky,
 And the darkness retiring rolls over the vale.
 The stars in their beauty come forth on high,
 And through the dark-blue night
 The moon rides on triumphant, broad and bright.
 Distinct and darkening in her light
 Appears that spectre foul.
 The moonbeam gives his form and face to sight,
 The shape of man,
 The living form and face of Arvalan !
 His hands are spread to clasp her.

"But at that sight of dread the maid awoke ;
 As if a lightning-stroke
 Had burst the spell of fear,
 Away she broke all frantically and fled."

There is no pretending to assign a *ne plus ultra* to the powers of poetry, that is, of human genius, with respect to greatness and originality of conception, nor to say that even Milton can absolutely never be exceeded ; nor is it as an example in this kind that we have transcribed this passage ; but we are confident that in the power of aggra-

vating a bold conception, by concentrating in it all the ideas, and none but the ideas, that can give it an intenser force, each of these ideas at once being perfect in itself, and perfectly combining to give augmented vigour to the principal one, and also in the felicity of expression, poetry has no possibility beyond it. A reader who has any power of imagination, returning, after a quick glance over the whole scene, to a more pointed attention to each of the lines by which it is presented, or rather created, will be struck and arrested by several of them, as by some touch of fascination. He will feel that he has never seen more perfect instances of images starting alive through the diction, if we might so express it, than in the lines: "Distinctly shaped by its own lurid light"—"And it grew deeper, kindling with the view"—and the two lines suggesting the simile of the eyes of a statue. If the poem contains hardly another passage of such superlative excellence, there yet are many that are but little inferior; and the critic cannot well find any language that would be extravagant in the expression of admiration of the genius displayed in them.

In this extremity the Pagan providence fails not to interpose again for Kailyal; and this time it is in the form of "Pollear, gentle god," into whose fane, fortunately just at hand, the maid had run to take sanctuary, close pursued by Arvalan, who was in the very act of seizing her, in the temple, when "the insulted god," that is, absolutely the image, shaped with an elephant's head,—

"Caught him aloft, and from his sinuous grasp,
As if from some tort catapult let loose,
Over the forest hurled him all abroad."

If it is asked, how the "spectre" of a dead man could be the subject of this mechanical feat, the poet signifies that it had, at this time, assumed by some means a substantial "fleshy" form. Now as there are in our own and the neighbouring countries spirits as vile as Arvalan, also inhabiting and actuating bodies, the moral of this part of the fiction is, plainly, that the part of the world where there are temples to Pollear is, for that reason, a much preferable country for unprotected maidens than this where Christianity forbids any such sanctuaries. It would have been

in perfect consistency if the poet had here, as in a former instance, called forth his own sensibility to perform, in Kailyal's name, an act of adoring gratitude to the heathen god; but the maiden's terror is made to overpower her piety. "She tarried not to see what heavenly power had saved her in that hour." She hastened away, and stumbled and fell senseless under the shade of a manchineel.

Thus far we have witnessed a remarkable triumph of powerful genius. The curse of the "Almighty Rajah" is a fancy, to which no force of poetry, ever displayed by mortal man, could give any, even the faintest shade of semblance of serious reality or possibility—or excite for one instant, in any cultivated English reader of mature age, any other sentiment than what is naturally awakened at a pure, perfect absurdity, especially when fabricated and gravely offered to us by a European writer of our own times; and yet, in following the effects, consistently imagined, of this malediction, we are compelled, by main force of admirable poetry, to take, thus far, an odd sort of concern in the fate of its supposed victims. This compulsory spell falls on us again in its original force, for a while, at several stages in the progress of the story. Its power is completely broken on our coming up to the manchineel tree above-mentioned. For Kailyal, when nearly dead under its pernicious shade, is taken away by a benevolent deveta or genius, whimsically denominated a Glendoveer, and borne up to the abode of Casyapa, the "Sire of Gods," on Mount "Himakoot," which,

"From mid-earth rising in mid-heaven,
Shines in its glory like the throne of Even."

It is a place of semi-celestial beauty and salubrity; and the maiden, laid near a sacred fountain, which testifies more than a lover's joy at touching her hand, gradually revives, and thinks herself passed by death into heaven, while Ereenia, the deveta, holds an explanatory conversation about her with his father Casyapa. After much is said on both sides, Ereenia resolves, and as soon as he notifies the design has the sanction of the "Father of the Immortals," to convey her to the Swerga, the heaven of Indra. He instantly calls a "ship of heaven," a vessel "instinct with

thought," self-moving, and having at its prow the living head of an angel. The maiden is placed in it: Ereenia, on wing, accompanies the voyage; and they soon reach the Swerga, the strange and beautiful scenery of which explains the whole object of the poet in sending Kailyal on this adventure. In her hearing, Ereenia has a dialogue with Indra, whose appearance announces a mingled kindness and austerity. They discuss the measures that ought to be adopted to avert the danger threatened to the Swerga itself by the dreadful power and designs of Kehama; the deveta venturing to reproach the god for want of decision and exertion, and expressing his determination to represent the state of the universe to Seeva himself, the highest of the gods. Indra has no objection to this, but signifies in manner gentle yet peremptory, that the maid, as being a mere mortal, though a most virtuous and amiable one, cannot be a permitted inhabitant of the Swerga; and she herself most earnestly entreats to be sent back to the earth, to be the companion, and if possible the consoler, of her miserable father. But Indra directs that she be conveyed to Mount Meru, a place, he says,—

"Below our sphere, and yet above the earth ;"

to which her father also shall be brought to meet her, enjoying, for a short interval, a full exemption from his sufferings.

Our author has made a strenuous and unrelaxing effort to spread all the colours of poetry over all this portion of the fiction; and it is very mortifying to think how much instructive pleasure might have been given by a rational application of about half as much beauty of images and versification, as he has here succeeded in throwing away on this mythological inanity. Not only is this beauty wasted lamentably in being expended on such a futile and most ridiculous piece of heathenism; it is also injured, as beauty, by the nature of the subject considered merely as matter of poetical exhibition. The subject being made up of gods, devetas, super-terrestrial mountains, sky voyages, Swerga galas, groves, and lakes, has a showy uniformity which precludes all relief of poetical light and shade. All is fine, and gaudy, and splendid, in every direction. *The whole vision is presented in one richly-coloured glare. The mind is dis-

satisfied, and soon tired, with this sort of beauty; in the same manner as the eye of a person who at noon-day in summer stands on a bare eminence, without any kind of recesses or shades, and looks round on a landscape all burnished with a perfectly unclouded sunshine. There is one very spirited and ingenious attempt to break the tameness of this magnificence, by forcing or bewitching the elements, into such a kind of combination and harmony, in the Swerga, as they have never been induced to consent to in the world allotted to Adam's people—where water and fire were less intended, as it should seem, for a playful self-construction into palaces, than for the uses of mills, steam-engines and kettles, cookery and washing.

“On that ethereal Lake whose waters lie
 Blue and transpicious, like another sky,
 The Elements had reared their King's abode.
 A strong controlling power their strife suspended,
 And there their hostile essences they blended,
 To form a palace worthy of the God.
 Built on the Lake the waters were its floor;
 And here its walls were water arched with fire,
 And here were fire with water vaulted o'er:
 And spires and pinnacles of fire
 Round watery cupolas aspire.
 And domes of rainbow rest on fiery towers,
 And roofs of flame are turretted around
 With cloud, and shafts of cloud with flame are bound.
 Here, too, the Elements for ever veer,
 Ranging around with endless interchanging;
 Pursued in love, and so in love pursuing,
 In endless revolutions here they roll;
 For ever their mysterious work renewing:
 The parts all shifting, still unchanged the whole.
 Even we on earth, at intervals descry
 Gleams of the glory, streaks of flowing light,
 Openings of heaven, and streams that flash at night
 In fitful splendour, through the northern sky.”

—Pp. 65, 66.

It will be acknowledged that, as to all that belongs to diction and numbers, nothing can exceed the felicity of this passage; and that in point of elegance of architecture, there is probably no other living professor of the art of

poetical building that could have framed, of the same material, so beautiful a phantasy of a structure, for Absurdity to hold its residence in, and laugh through the ethereal windows at dull Philosophy. But since it is presumable that the poem was meant for reading here in this world, even on this earth, we cannot but hold it an injudicious license of genius, thus to represent water and fire as absolved from all the laws which we see them invariably observing, positively, and with relation to each other, in this world, where neither poets nor heathen gods have prescribed their mode of action. Admitting readily, and even adding our testimony, that in the Swerga, the temper and conduct of water and fire are exactly such as here described, we cannot see any good use of an attempt to make the people of this world discontent with the less playful, more obstinate, but perhaps, after all, more serviceable spirit and deportment of our own fire and water.

As the scenes and persons of the Swerga cannot enchant any reader for one instant into a dreaming visionary mood, there would be no finding patience to stay there till the end of the adventure but, for the sake of seeing what is to become of Kailyal, who is always and everywhere so lovely and magnanimous, that some very small degree of interest survives to linger about her, even in the Swerga—notwithstanding our perfect faith in an averment that falls from Indra, in one of his speeches, that no mortal has any business there. The character of Ereenia, the good genius, is formed of a certain measure of absolute goodness, without any complexity of moral constitution, or any very marked peculiarities. It is, if we may so express it, just so much pure light defined into a shape by a single outline. His personal form, his wings, and his movements, have every grace they could receive from a poet who can write such lines as the following:—

“Of human form divine was he;
The immortal youth of Heaven who floated by,
Even such as that divinest form shall be
In those blest stages of our onward race,
When no infirmity,
Low thought, nor base desire, nor wasting care,
Debase the semblance of our heavenly sire.”

While Kailyal is being conveyed to the paradise of Mount Meru, we are suddenly set down in the presence of Kehama, who having already sacrificed ninety-nine consecrated horses, at so many successive periods, is approaching the moment for offering the hundredth, as a sacrifice, of which the effect is to be nothing less than to wrest the Swerga from the possession of Indra. In this curious coupling of causes and effects, the Hindoo poets fully authorize their European rival, who begins his preface by adverting to this point.

The preparations for the sacrifice are managed with great address to stimulate expectation, and yet prevent the smallest surmise of what is really to happen. There is a very fine description of Kehama's waiting for the moment, rising, going to the altar, and taking the axe, while the wild horse is made to approach by two vast lines of archers, who gradually close in and contract the area in order to impel him on. He must not have been profaned by the touch of any human hand; for that would destroy the merit of the sacrifice. Just before the fatal moment, a man darts into the area, through the lines of archers, unhurt by a shower of their arrows, seizes the horse's mane, leaps on his back, and with frantic cry and gestures gallops round the area, while the tyrant claps his hands in agony. Here the poet again triumphs imperially over, at once, the unfortunate quality of his subject, and the repugnance of his coldest reader, who is surprised into exultation by this sudden intervention of Ladurlad, empowered for this vengeance on the tyrant, solely through the effect of the tyrant's curse. Ladurlad, however, is disappointed in his hope that the Rajah's anger would inflict death. In his utmost fury Kehama is not betrayed to forget that this would be a favour. As the greatest possible revenge, he dismisses the offender under the continuance of his curse; but makes a horrible massacre of the archers for not having prevented him from forcing through their ranks.

The sufferer, wandering away, goes unconsciously in the direction to his own former habitation. Entering its melancholy solitude, looking at the flowers in the garden, and at the marriage-bower, finding the domestic fowls that Kailyal used to feed flocking around him, and hearing the sounds of thoughtless mirth from a distant crowd of people, he is

made to feel a succession of afflictive emotions, excellently conceived and discriminated, and intermingled with images, most happily painted, of the various objects which excite them. Being powerfully reminded of Kailyal, he pours out a fervent prayer for her to Marriataly; and our worthy venerators of the Hindoo gods will be excessively affected and grieved that it should be precisely in *consequence of "religion,"* that he is broken in upon by the "rough" visage and laugh of Arvalan, scoffing at his prayer. He glances round for some instrument of offence, and happens to find the very stake with which he had discomfited that fiend; but it is ineffective against the "impassive shade," which renews its laugh, and concentrates, without the aid of a lens or mirror, a quantity of sun-beams, making the focus fall on Ladurlad with such a power as to reduce the stake instantly to ashes; the man himself, however, being by the "fire in his heart and brain," rendered invulnerable to all other fire. But Arvalan next raises a storm of sand which overwhelms and almost suffocates him wherever he turns. Down in a moment comes Ereenia with his hanger drawn, sends the fiend, who is represented as *not* impassive to this attack, howling away; then calls the "Ship of Heaven," and Ladurlad is instantly in the delicious gardens of Mount Meru, where he finds his daughter and his wife.

It may be worth while to notice, in passing, that Mr. Southey, in adopting some of the Hindoo fictions, neither regards himself as under any obligation to keep in view the general scheme of the mythology, nor acknowledges the duty of strictly conforming to the orthodox standard in his manner of exhibiting these detached parts. He takes out any piece of fiction that he can most advantageously turn into English poetry, leaves out of it whatever he dislikes, adds whatever he pleases, and, for the convenience of versification, transforms the most venerable and established names. Thus all the bearings of these fantastic scenes and objects, as relative to the Brahminical system, are confounded, and, indeed, totally lost. When, in imitation of a much greater genius, he takes Christians to the top of an exceeding high mountain, Himakoot, for instance, or Meru, he not only fails to show, in regular perspective, all the kingdoms of the Hindoo mythological world, and the glory

of them; he also fails to enable the tempted spectator to form any judgment, or probable guess, as to the boundary and the cardinal points of the wide scene, and as to the real locality, relatively to these points and to one another, of those objects which are made visible above the mist that covers all but so much of the immense region, and gives a dubious colour to what it does not conceal. Here we are, as we are told, on the top of Himakoot, or Hemacuta, and yonder appears what we are told is the more elevated top of Meru, and somewhere beyond the clouds is the Swerga; but we are made never the wiser as to what parts of the Purana universe these lofty and magnificent positions occupy or constitute—as to what there is contiguous to them or between them—or as to the degree of excellence of one above another. Now, though, in so far as the tempter's object, the captivating of the spectator's mind by the beauties and wonders of the heathen scenery, is defeated by this exhibition of broken and misrepresented pieces, which no human imagination can combine into a picture, we are sincerely glad; yet we think the said tempter has herein flagrantly violated the just laws of poetry. It is surely required, of a European poet at least, that when he undertakes to figure forth scenes and personages, he should have in his mind some defined economy of existence, to which they may belong; that the circumscription and principal lines of this economy should be clearly brought and kept within the view of his readers; and that the fictions should be in strict conformity with the laws of this economy, and capable of being so referred to their proper place in it, as that the reader's mind can glance from one to another, and from each of them over the whole breadth of the system, with a ready apprehension of *whereabouts he is*, if we may so express it, in this poetical world, at each successive stage of the fictitious relation. It may be a matter of perfect indifference whether the ideal economy, within which the poet chooses to place the scene of his action, be one of the heathen mythologies, or be drawn from parts formed from several of them, and so modified as to combine into one consistent scheme, or be formed of a combination of some parts of them with creations of the poet's own fancy; or be purely and entirely a creation of that fancy. All this may

be left to his choice or caprice, the only grand indispensable rule being, (we are here setting aside all moral and religious considerations) that whichever of these he chooses, he must make it an intelligible and orderly economy—a world of which the reader's mind can comprehend the general constitution, the disposition and relation of the parts, and all the chief arrangements. This rule has been so little regarded in the present work, that, in trying to follow out the fiction, the reader often finds himself *in no world at all*. His imagination labours and despairs amidst a chaos of large crude fragments of Hindoo mythology (exhibiting indeed in this broken state not a more complete disorder than they would if put together), intermixed with pieces of this real world of earth, and not brought in the least degree nearer to a congruous or intelligible scheme by being, many of them transformed from the genuine Hindoo absurdity into a spurious absurdity of the poet's own. In short, there will not be one person among all the readers of this work, that, on coming to the close of it, after having most attentively followed the poet to Ilimakoot, to Meru, to the Swerga, to the "World's End," and to Padalon, will find his imagination possessed of anything like a comprehensive view of these scenes, with what they respectively contain, disposed in their relative order, and forming one grand scheme. This would be fatal, infallibly, to the interest of any work of the greatest possible genius. There may be the greatest admiration of beautiful parts, there may be also the strongest perception of the richness of imagery spread over the whole chaotic assemblage; but, in spite of all this, the mind will revolt irrecoverably from a work which confounds its best exertions to form within itself the order of the scenes which the work calls it to contemplate. It is barely worth while to observe that all the great epic poets (of Europe, we mean) of ancient and modern times, have maintained, in their representations of ideal worlds, that principle of order which requires even the boldest and wildest creation of fancy, to be shaped according to a systematic and comprehensible scheme. Were it possible that any reader, while displeased at a formless exhibition of unjoined pieces of mythology, should yet be so captivated with the quality of the material, as to resolve that he abso-

lutely *will* know something about the *system* from which these precious but here adulterated fictions have been obtained; it will be fair to suggest the question to him, whether he is sure of fifty future years of life, and health, and leisure; whether, being sure of that, he can be confident of his unconquerable perseverance so long in daily laborious research; and whether, this also being out of doubt, he is certain that no worthier use could be made of his life. Even if he were content to live without a knowledge of the system, and his curiosity aspired no further than to a clear and full understanding about the Swerga and Mount Meru, it is right he should be apprised of the previous necessity of securing himself a long vacation from business and all other studies; as he will find that all our erudite orientalists are exceedingly reserved in their communication about the Swerga, and will be convinced, on looking into a most learned essay in the eighth volume of the "*Asiatic Researches*," that the questions respecting the locality, the shape, the occupants, and the precincts, of Mount Meru, will demand an investigation several years long at the least. The ordinary doctrine, given out in a very vague way, calls the Swerga the heaven of Indra, and makes Meru the north pole and polar regions, where this same Indra has a delightful paradise, a splendid palace, a junta of gods, a stupendous elephant, and a car which the poet professes to have taken as the model for his "*Ship of Heaven*." Whether there be any ices there, but what are prepared in cellars to regale the gods in hot weather, and whether the Swerga is to be found anywhere else than in the park and gardens round the palace, is not deposed with anything like the precision which is desirable in such important questions.

It is probable enough, however, that Ladurlad cared as little as we do *where* this Mount Meru should be, so long as he there felt himself comfortably out of the reach of Kehama. We find him rid of his sufferings, and with delightful sensations rushing in upon him on all sides. One of the first of them is from his hand being in the water of a "*blessed lake*," on the bank of which the Glendoveer lays him down. This lake is formed by the Ganges, at a middle stage of its descent from heaven. The whole course of the descent is

traced in meanders and cascades of most elegant verse ; and the poet relates, in his own person, and with a religious gravity, the origination of this river from the sweat which started on the face of Seeva, in the moment of his fright at the dreadful effect produced on the universe in consequence of the shutting of one of his eyes by the finger of his spouse Parvati, in her wanton playfulness. We will transcribe the lines to show what progress Mr. Southey judges the people of this island to have made in good sense and good taste, by the aid of all their schools, colleges, churches, and libraries.

“ A Stream descends on Meru mountain ;
 None hath seen its secret fountain ;
 It had its birth, so sages say,
 Upon the memorable day
 When Parvati presumed to lay,
 In wanton play,
 Her hands, too venturous goddess, in her mirth,
 On Seeva's eyes, the light and life of Earth.
 Thereat the heart of the Universe stood still ;
 The Elements ceased their influence ; the Hours
 Stopped on the eternal round ; Motion and Breath,
 Time, Change, and Life, and Death,
 In sudden trance oppressed, forgot their powers.
 A moment, and the dread eclipse was ended ;
 But, at the thought of Nature thus suspended,
 The sweat on Seeva's forehead stood,
 And Ganges thence upon the world descended,
 The Holy River, the Redeeming Flood.”—P. 94.

A blooming bower appears to spring up of a sudden (the poet says the “earth builds it up”) round Ladurlad, his daughter, and the Glendoveer. Yedillian, the beloved wife whom Ladurlad had long since lost by death, is added to the happy company, with circumstances of extreme tenderness ; the description of which is followed by a declamation, in a somewhat inferior style, on the continuance, perfection, and perpetuity of love after death. Kehama's victim, in this happy sojourn in a region beyond the power of the curse, does not forget that he is soon to feel again its malignant force. But Ereenia enlarges splendidly on the power and goodness of the gods, the Avatars of Vishnoo, and the certainty of a final triumph and recompense to invincible

virtue. And, notwithstanding that it is declared expressly, at the distance of only two pages, that "all in Heaven and Earth" but this very Ladurlad, had "stood mute in dolorous expectation" on the occasion of the sacrifice which Kehama had so nearly completed,—notwithstanding this, Ladurlad, in contemplating the power and justice of the gods, becomes wonderfully strong in "Faith;" a quality or virtue which, as we can recollect, appears with grand distinction in a Book which was sent to drive pagan gods and their worship from the earth, and which, therefore, we submit, will give little tolerance to a language like the following, as applied by a poet, instructed in Christianity, to a supposed confidence in Vishnoo and Seeva.

"So to Ladurlad now was given
New strength and confidence in Heaven,
And hope and faith invincible."—P. 102.

"Thus was Ladurlad's soul imbued
With hope and holy fortitude."

"Faith was their comfort, faith their stay."—P. 103.

While Ladurlad is thus edified by contemplating the gods as to be *his* deliverers from Kehama, the gods are edified and comforted marvellously in contemplating him as having been *their* deliverer from the identical Kehama. Sundry of them approach, in the air, the happy bower, to look at this saviour of the divine immortals from a Rajah of flesh and blood. As might be supposed, however, their attention is almost as much attracted by the charms of their deliverer's pretty daughter; and having learnt a little of the characters of those gentry, by means of translations of parts of the Hindoo "Sacred Scriptures," we are warranted in attributing her safety to anything rather than their gratitude or their honour. Perhaps they were looking forward apprehensively to the next hundredth horse of Kehama; the accomplishment of which sacrifice indeed it would hardly be worth Ladurlad's while to defeat by another opportune intervention in favour of such a set of villains. From whatever cause, they forbear all injury or insult in the present instance; except that it is fairly impossible for Camdeo, the god of love, to deny himself the sport of aiming just one

couple of shafts at Ereenia and Kailyal. The former is struck with the arrow, but calmly and sincerely derides the archer. At the instant that the other shaft is pointed at Kailyal, the string breaks, fortunately for her, it is meant to be intimated, but rather unaccountably, as it is made of *bees* linked together by the legs. The pieces of this broken bow-string dart away instead of the shaft, to Kailyal, and delighted play and "buzz about her."

Mischief is aimed at the inhabitants of this delightful abode from another quarter. Arvalan, after being sent off hacked and howling by Ereenia, had recourse, not for the first time, to Lorrinite, a dreadful enchantress, demanding to be informed where he might find his escaped prey, and to be furnished with arms and armour of proof against her celestial guardian. It may well be believed he can hardly make a demand which she cannot satisfy, when it is seen by what means she discovers to him Kailyal's asylum.

"At this the Witch, through shrivelled lips and thin,
Sent forth a sound half-whistle and half-hiss.

Two winged Hands came in,

Armless and bodyless,

Bearing a globe of liquid crystal, set

In frame as diamond bright, yet black as jet.

A thousand eyes were quenched in endless night,

To form that magic globe; for Lorrinite

Had, from their sockets, drawn the liquid sight,

And kneaded it, with re-creating skill

Into this organ of her mighty will.

Look in yonder orb, she cried,

Tell me what is there descried."—P. 116.

What he describes, is, of course, a picture of the top of Meru, with its bower, and the happy inhabitants, each of whom he instantly recognizes. He takes the arms and armour of infernal fabric brought by Lorrinite, and eagerly ascends her car of adamant, fixed over the backs of two mighty dragons, which, directed by him, dart upward with inconceivable force. He is in sight of the palace and bowers of Indra, and exulting in demoniac anticipation, when coming to a level with the zone of adamantine rocks round Mount Meru, the car is seized and drawn by an irresistible attraction: the dragons cannot take it upward another inch:

they, and it, and the demoniac, drive, and whirl, and rage away, till they dash against the rocks; and the miscreant falls ten thousand thousand fathoms, pitching into "an ice-rift, 'mid the eternal snow." "There," as the poet says, "let him howl,"

"Groan there,—and there, with unavailing moan
For aid on his Almighty Father call."

We think this catastrophe is a little emblematical of the fate of genius, when exerting its vigour on such subjects as this. Can the poet imagine a possibility of pleasing any one mortal by all this idle devilment? He cannot know so little of the intellectual taste of the times, as to suppose that, because there are some cultivated readers who are disposed to look into the romance and poetry of the darker ages of Europe, and are considerably interested in observing what silly monstrosities, in the way of magic, apprenticeship of devils to witches, and a hundred various modes of infernality, were capable of being made popular amidst the wretched barbarism and superstition of those times, therefore a new story of the same sort, made up and told, with the same earnest gravity, in the year 1810, can excite any other sensations than the most intense disgust and contempt. It is in a poet's power, as we are certified by the present instance, to effect his own transmigration back into a monk or minstrel of the rudest age, or even into an ancient Brahmin poet-laureate to the thirty-three millions of gods. But really in that case he must be contented to sing to his adopted contemporaries. He will not be able to take back with him his actual contemporaries of the nineteenth century—excepting, perhaps, Messrs. Twining and Scott-Waring. Assuredly, the generality of the people of these times will peremptorily decline putting themselves into a condition to be delighted with the story of a woman, plainly a real human female, who, at the price of delivering herself up to a legion of "fiends," was empowered to command their services for all malicious operations; who, by her connexion with them, became a kind of living embodied "hell," shooting from her eyes a quintessence of "venomous" spirit which blasted all animal and all vegetable life; whose approach made the "dry and mouldering bones in the grave

sweat with fear;" who formed, for the purpose of human destruction, a league with the *Calis*, the "Demon Queens," presiding over the Hindoo cities, and a partnership with "Sani, the dreadful god, who rides abroad upon the king of the ravens," to relieve him in the toils of killing; who directed with her finger or her word the operation of earthquakes, plagues, locusts, floods, and drought; who could make a magic oracle-glass of the extracted "liquid sight of a thousand human eyes;" whose stable was a den of yoked dragons; and who had and did many other most prodigious things, according to the evidence given in this volume. To think that amidst the beams of the sun and moon, the light of the Christian religion, and the sense and philosophy of modern Europe, a genius like Mr. Southey's should be solemnly employed in business like this!

We will try to make better haste towards the conclusion of our analysis. "Old Casyapa" arrives, in the "Ship of Heaven," on Meru, to announce that the day is come for completing Kehama's sacrifice, which it is declared that nobody in earth or heaven can prevent this time; that Indra and his suite are preparing to quit the Swerga, taking with them, as it should appear by what is said afterwards, the famous palace itself; that the consummating stroke of the sacrifice will presently be felt like an earthquake through Mount Meru (between which and the Swerga, the distinction is still made out in but a very faint and confused way); that Casyapa himself is going to be ejected from Himakoot, in his leap of which, indeed, we wonder that Kehama (whose estate must long have included that district of merely terrestrial highland), had not long since taken occasion to find a flaw; and that Ladurlad and his daughter must instantly return to the earth. The heroic victim hears this with a simple dignity of manner which the poet is always eminently successful in giving him; places his daughter in the "ethereal bark;" and himself beside her, feels the sudden return of the curse in his descent, and reaches the earth about the moment that Kehama begins his triumphant ascent to take possession of the Swerga—an event accompanied with the most dreadful commotion through heaven and earth, and of which the following lines conclude the celebration:—

"Up rose the Rajah through the conquered sky,
 To seize the Swerga for his proud abode ;
 Myriads of evil genii round him fly,
 As royally, *on wings of winds*, he rode,
 And scaled high Heaven, triumphant like a God."—P. 130.

Here an exceedingly remarkable image, applied in the Bible to the agency of the Almighty, and not made common by any other application, is transferred to a personage at once fictitious, connected with Paganism, and horribly wicked. The natural tendency of this is to associate in the reader's mind, by a community in so very remarkable, so very peculiar a descriptive representation, the idea of that Being and of this personage ; and no language of reprobation can be too strong for the occasion.

Kailyal tenderly insinuates to her father, the request that he will not again separate from her, and he with equal tenderness promises, that by choice he never will. They are placed in a glade amidst a wood ; and on their looking round to consider which way they shall wander, she suggests, that certain, alike in every situation, to be pursued by their destiny, they shall in vain seek any more eligible place than the one where they are, which has various recommendations—but in making her so directly specify among them

"A brook that winds through this sequestered glade,
 And yonder woods, to yield us fruit and shade,"

the poet has not duly preserved that perceptive watchfulness of affection, in which she is generally made so perfect ; as water, fruit, and shade, would be of no use to her father. The features of the scene, the great banyan tree, and the small lake, with lotus flowers : the brute inhabitants, the leopards, elephants, monkeys, and birds, are presented in a picture in which the more steady phenomena of their natural history, are combined with many of those fine and variable circumstances, which scarcely appear to any but a poet's eye, and leave, but on a poet's imagination, no trace that can be reduced into language. And, what could not have been expected, these sketches do not lose the distinctness of their beauty, as true delineations, by being combined with a great deal of extra-natural intelligence, obsequiousness, admiration, and affection, displayed by all sorts of animals towards

Kailyal. The fortitude of the two sufferers becomes more and more consolidated; and is so finely represented, that it would have furnished a noble spectacle, if the fable had allowed of its being rested on any basis that truth did not require the reader to condemn. The reader, however, that is aggrieved by this wretched obligation on the poet, of fidelity to his fable, will not obtain much sympathy from that poet—if we may judge from the appearance of free and complacent effusion of soul in reciting Kailyal's renewed emotions to Marriataly, and Ladurlad's to a "higher power," as it is here pronounced to be—

"To her, who on her secret throne reclined,
Amid the milky sea; by Veeshnoo's side,
Looks with an eye of mercy on mankind.
By the Preserver, with his power endued,
There Voombavee beholds this lower clime,
And marks the silent suffering of the good,
To recompense them in her own good time."—P. 137,

—if we may judge by his so formally adopting, as appropriate to the case, the peculiar phrases of Christian theology:

"Such strength the will revealed had given
This holy pair, such influxes of grace,
That to their solitary resting-place
They brought the peace of Heaven."—P. 138.

Thus a writer who displays, on so many subjects, an exquisitely refined perception of discriminations and congruities, and highly excels in preserving, amidst a diversified multiplicity of things, the purity and integrity of any quality or sentiment, which he regards as of sufficient dignity to be kept thus inviolate, is willing to confound the true religion with a detestable superstition, by very carefully making their devotional sentiments identical, and the language descriptive of them interchangeable.

Kailyal's mingled despondency and hope, respecting any further care or intervention of Ereenia, are very delicately characterized by some of the symptoms of personal tenderness. While pensively afraid that he has withdrawn his guardianship, and unaware that she is unceasingly followed by the keenest attention of Lorrinite, Arvalan, and Kehama,

which last, it is intimated; perceives her destiny to be mysteriously connected with his own, one more preparatory portion of that destiny is accomplished, by her being suddenly seized and carried off, by a band of Yogueses, as a fit bride for Jaggernaut. A thousand frantic pilgrims draw forth, in the night, that hideous idol, with Kailyal placed beside him, amidst the glare of torches, and a terrible hubbub of shouts, gongs, and trumpets, which overpowers the groans of the self-devoted wretches perishing under the wheels of the enormous carriage that

-“Rolls on, and crushes all.
Through blood and bones it ploughs its dreadful path.
Groans rise unheard; the dying cry,
And death and agony,
Are trodden under foot by you mad throng
Who follow close and thrust the deadly wheels along.”

—P. 147.

Filled with dread and amazement at this scene, which the poet describes with congenial fury of verse, she is yet soon to be placed in one of more intense horror. She is conveyed back to the temple; hailed with soft music by a band of female ministers to its abomination, as the happy bride of the god; conducted into a retired apartment; and there left alone: but not long. The chief priest of this infernal fan makes his appearance in the apartment, and approaches her, as tho god. Suddenly he is obstructed by some unseen power, and with a horrid cry falls dead on the floor. But just as Kailyal looks up, expecting to see Ereenia as the inflictor of this just vengeance, the body becomes re-animated with another soul,

“And in the fiendish joy within his eyes,
She knew the hateful spirit who looked through
Their specular orbs, clothed in the flesh of man,
She knew the acursed soul of Arvalan.”

She calls on Ereenia, who instantly appears, catches Arvalan up to the roof of the temple, and dashes him in pieces on the floor. At this instant appears Lorrinite with her “host of demons,” whom she commands to seize Ereenia, carry him off, and confine him in the ancient submarine, “sepulchres of Baly;” which is all done in a minute, while she

makes up the smashed corpse again for the use of Arvalan, whom she incites and leaves to seize the prey, thrown at last so completely into his power. But Kuliyal, in cool and desperate self-possession, snatches a torch, (it is not explained how such a thing could be within her reach,) and sets the furniture of the bed in a blaze, which catches, in a moment, all that is combustible in the temple, except in the precise spot where she is placed, and drives away the scorched and bellowing miscreant. She is resigning herself to perish by this infinitely preferable mode of sacrifice, when, as another felicitous consequence of the curse, Ladurlad rushes in and bears away his daughter through the flames,—which Kehama had made harmless to him, but which the poet alone could make harmless to her.

They then make a long journey to the ruins of the city of Baly, to rescue Ereenia; the maiden, for her now almost adored Glendoveer's sake, exulting, and even Ladurlad at intervals heroically exulting in the power, conferred by the dreadful charm, of entering the vaults under the ocean. During their journey, he gives her the history of Baly, whose ambition, in making a similar attempt to that in which Kehama had recently succeeded, had consigned him to Padalon, or Hell, but whose many eminent virtues had obtained him there the high situation of judge of the dead. They reach at length the shore, where they see the pinnacles of the ancient structures, extending to a distance in the sea, Ladurlad commences the enterprise with great alacrity and elation: advancing into the sea, which starts and separates before him, rises above him, as his way descends, and soon closes in an arch over him, preserving, wherever he advances or turns, a vacancy of little greater extent than the dimensions of his person. This adventure furnishes, by what he sees, and the spirit in which he sees and acts, some of the finest poetry in the work. Nothing, for example, can be more exquisitely described, than the varying lights and shades on the sand.

“ With steady tread he held his way
 Adown the sloping shore,
 The dark green waves, with emerald hue,
 Imbue the beams of day,
 And on the wrinkled sand below,

Rolling their mazy network to and fro,
Light shadows shift and play."—P. 168

Sea monsters impetuously dart towards him, but as hastily dart away. He reaches the gate of the ancient city, but pauses awhile in admiration before he enters it. It is open, just as it had been left by the multitude rushing out to escape, when the sea was rising to overwhelm the city. All the structures are represented as remaining unimpaired, after an unknown series of ages, which have only given, through the medium of an affection of the spectator's mind, a more awful aspect to the temples and palaces, a more mysterious and yet impressive significance to the statues, emblems, and inscriptions. And the effect is prodigiously heightened by the profound solitude, "the everlasting stillness of the deep." The whole most admirable description has a tone of solemnity perfectly harmonious with the magnificence, the antiquity, the submarine retirement and obscurity, and the total and endless solitude of the scene. And it greatly heightens our interest in Ladurlad's character that the manner in which he contemplates and explores these wonders, withdrawn for ever from all other human sight, shows him worthy to tread

"Those streets which never, since the days of yore,
By human footstep had been visited ;
Those streets which never more
A human foot shall tread."

He takes the broad mighty impression of so strange a scene ; gazing with such an absorption of solemn delight that he forgets, for a little while, the curse, the immediate object of his adventure, and even his daughter. He acquires dignity by being thus made to possess so much mental faculty as to be, in defiance of all circumstances and distractions, powerfully arrested, by what is grand, awful, and beautiful. It might be doubted, perhaps, whether an Indian "*peasant*" would be likely to have had his imagination and taste sufficiently cultivated to be susceptible of so strong a captivation ; but there is no saying how much he may have profited in the studies conducive to fine taste, during his residence on Mount Meru, in the society of Eroonia, and in reach of Indra's fine library.

Recollecting, after this short and happy entrancement the purpose he came upon, he finds and enters the way to the sepulchral chambers of the kings; losing, as he goes down, "the sea-green light of day," which is supposed to have been thus far transmitted to him, and meeting in the passage another light, "of red and fiery hue." This proves to proceed from carbuncles set in the sceptres held in the hands of the dead kings, sitting in this great vault each on a throne, in a separate "alcove," and all in the condition of perfect, fresh-looking, and supple flesh and limb, with eyes open, "large, glazed, fixed, and meaningless," and "rayless," except that they "dimly reflected to that gem-born light." There was another alcove, which had been intended for the sepulchral residence of Baly, if he had not given himself a different destiny; and there Ladurlad describes Ercenia, bound to the rock with a ponderous chain of adamant, and guarded by a most hideous sea monster, fixed to that station by Lorrinite. There ensues a furious uninterrupted combat of six days and nights between this monster and our hero, who, being charmed against both fatigue and wounds, literally tires to death his strong and fell antagonist, by the evening of the seventh day. He then cuts with a scimitar the fetters of the Glendoveer, and they most joyfully ascend in quest of Kailjal, who has been waiting so many days with a fearful impatience, that had grown at last almost to anguish, but has become the impatience of confident hope, from the sight of the dead monster, which has previously risen and drifted to the shore. They meet; when, in the very moment of their rapture, who should appear but Arvalan again, and Lorrinite with her demons, ready to make once more their respective captious.

But it so happens that, unseen, Baly also was come to the identical spot. He suddenly shines out "among them in the midnight air," seizes with a hundred hands the whole crew; stamps and splits the earth; and in an instant plunges down with them into Padalon—where the reader is for their sakes heartily content there should be a permanent suspension of the Habeas Corpus. A violent shriek of invocation to Kehama brings him from the Swerga, with the velocity and fury of a thunderbolt, but too late to

rescue his son. But he also can stamp, make the earth cleave again, and hurl down a challenge to Baly and Yamen, assuring them it shall not be long before he makes ingress on their territory, and gives them some warm employment. The earth has his permission to close up the rent; and he then fixes his eyes on Kailyal, with a somewhat less than usual severity of aspect, and signifies to her, that as she now perceives it to be among the appointments of fate that he and she alone, of all mortals, are to drink the Amreeta, or drink of immortality, it necessarily follows that she is his destined bride. He invites her to the accomplishment of that glorious destiny; and to prove himself quite serious, in the affair, he at a word neutralizes the deadly curse, and observes to Ladurlad, in a condescending and almost pensive tone, that they both have been, thus far, but fulfilling, unconsciously, the decrees of fate. The lady declines, in terms of, perhaps, deficient politeness, to become queen of the Swerga, "and of whatever worlds beside infinity may hide." His brow darkens, and the sentence that begins with a kind of plea that she ought to be gratefully proud to comply, ends in a threatening that she shall be compelled. A violent fulmination of his anger explodes him back into the sky. Ladurlad has the curse again, and his daughter a leprosy. She is magnanimous enough to rejoice in the protection which this will afford her, against the dangers to which her beauty would have exposed her. The only distress is, to think what its effect may be on the complacency of Erenia.

That Glendoveer, the while, is* gone on an "emprizo" which the whole magazine of pompous epithets is emptied to blazon out as most daring and awful. It is to represent his wrongs to Seeva himself, the uppermost of all the gods. Though the said Seeva is declared omnipresent, yet the appellant must make his petition on a certain silver Mount Calasay, the outermost point, or somewhere beyond the outermost point, of all worlds. The difficulty of the achievement, in point of time and flying merely, is formidably intimated by a serious and authentic relation—how that once on a time, when Brahma and Veeshnoo were quarrelling most furiously for the pre-eminence, Seeva (there being most likely no officer of police at hand) determined

to put an end to the rivalry, by showing them who was the master of them both. For this purpose he presented himself to them in the form of a fiery column, the longitude of which they were to explore; but a thousand years of ascent, and "ten myriads years" of descent, did not bring Brahma to the upper end, nor Veeshnoo to the lower. A considerable number of pages, in this part, exhibit another most earnest, though unavailing effort to give a power of grand and religious impression to some of the silliest phantasms of mythology. The sanctities of the true temple are rifled for the profane service; the attributes of the Deity are with most religious formality given to Seeva; and the poet is pertinaciously resolute that "intensity of faith and holiest love" shall be no distinctive qualities of Christian devotion. As an auspicious termination of the adventure, it is signified from Seeva to Ereenia, that he and his complainant friends must carry their suit to the throne of Yamen, where "all odds will be made even."

The sections ensuing, therefore, are intitled "The Embarkation" and "The World's End;" and relate, with extraordinary force of imagination, a voyage of the three friends across a dark stormy sea, which separates this world from the next—the emotions of the two human adventurers—the landing on an "icy belt"—and the appearances of the various classes of ghosts, there waiting to be carried down by demons, through a dark lake to the place of judgment. Much of this gloomy vision is presented with little less pointed specificity, if we may so express it, of circumstance, and little less intensity of colouring, than the following description:—

"Then might be seen who went in hope, and who
Trembled to meet the mood
Of many a foul misdeed, as wild they threw
Their arms retorted from the demon's grasp,
And looked around, all eagerly, to seek
For help, where help was none; and strove for aid
To clasp the nearest shade;
Yea, with imploring looks and horrent shriek,
Even from one demon to another bending,
With hands extending,
Their mercy they essayed.
Still from the verge they strain,

And from the dreadful gulph avert their eyes,
In vain ; down plunge the demons, and their cries
Feebly, as down they sink, from that profound arise."

—P. 125.

Ereenia takes Kailyal first, and afterwards her father, down through the lake to the southern gate of Padalon. In the moment of preparing for this formidable plunge with the first, he addresses her in language containing a parody which cannot be lost on the readers of the gospels :—

"Be of good heart, beloved ! it is I
Who bear thee."

Arrived at the gate, they are assailed by terrific sounds, and receive, from the giant god that guards it, a most appalling description of the essential, and of the present occasional state of Padalon ; for, it seems, the confident expectation of Kehama's acquiring the dominion of hell as well as heaven, has excited among the wicked spirits, throughout the whole infernal dominion, such a dreadful insurrectional fury, that even Yamen trembles on his throne ; while *they* are invoking, with thundering clamours, the Rajah to set them free with his "irresistible right hand,"—a hand, be it remembered, constructed of a few ounces of bone and flesh. The warden god furnishes the two mortals with incombustible robes, as a protection in passing through the region of fire, and a one-wheeled chariot, which, self-directed, carries the adventurers over a vast bridge, as sharp as the edge of a scimitar, which spans the sea of fire that encircles Padalon.

They pass through a horrible scene of torment, and rage, and tumult, till they come to the metropolis of Yamen, who is found seated on a marble sepulchre, with Baly on a judgment-seat, at his feet : and

"A golden throne before them vacant stood ;
Three human forms sustained its ponderous weight,
With lifted hands outspread, and shoulders bowed,
Bending beneath their load :

A fourth was wanting. They were of the hue
Of walls of fire ; yet were were they flesh and blood,
And living breath they drew :

And their red eye-balls rolled with ghastly stare,
As thus, for their misdeeds they stood tormented there." —

P. 251.

Yamen bids them wait with patience the awful hour appointed to decide the fate of Padalon and the universe; which hour, he says, is fast approaching. And so it proves; for even while he is speaking, the hideous uproar sinks in a silence much more portentous and terrible. Shortly this silence gives place to a distant sound, which is soon perceived to be advancing and deepening. It is nothing less than the approach of Kehama; who, multiplying or dividing himself into eight distinct persons, has invaded Padalon by its eight different gates, all at one moment; comes driving on furiously in eight chariots; invests the infernal god; and, after a dreadful but short conflict, places his foot triumphantly on his neck. He dallies awhile with his new power, to feel the triumph more exquisitely; but soon imperiously demands the Amreeta, for himself and Kailyal. A "huge Anatomy" rises from the marble tomb, and presents the cup. He drinks, and becomes the fourth tormented and immortal statue, under the "golden throne." Then Kailyal drinks, is transformed into a perfectly ethereal being, and is rapturously welcomed by Ereenia as now his equal and immortal companion. Ladurlad is dismissed by a gentle death to meet them, and the happy spirit of his wife, in the Swerga.

The preceding abstract has so far exceeded all reasonable bounds, and has so often digressed into comments, that the observations we may wish to add must be allowed to occupy but a very small space. They can indeed do little else than assert, in a somewhat more general form, several of the principles which we have ventured to apply here and there to the work, in passing along.

We must repeat then, in the first place, our censure of the adoption or creation of so *absurd* a fable. It is little enough, to be sure, that we know of the order of the universe. But yet human reason, after earnest and indefatigable efforts of inquiry, through several thousands of years, (during a great part of which period the inquiry has been prosecuted under the advantage of a revelation), finds itself in possession of a few general principles which may, without presumption, be deemed to inhere in, and regulate the universal system:—insomuch that these principles would be very confidently assigned, by thinking men, as reasons for disbelieving a great many propositions that might be

advanced, relative to the moral or the physical order of the creation, or any of its parts,—relative to the economy of any supposed class of intelligent beings. And in proportion as we withdraw from the immensity of this subject, and bring our thoughts near this world of our own, we find ourselves authorized to apply still more principles, and to reject or to affirm still more propositions relative to beings that, if they exist at all, must exist according to an order in many points analogous to our own economy. Let it be assumed, for instance, that there are inhabitants in the moon, and we shall be warranted on the ground of the various circumstances of the analogy between their place of abode and ours, to advance a great deal more in the way of probable conjecture respecting their economy, than we could respecting an order of beings, our only *datum* concerning which should be, that whatever and wherever it is, its condition has less resemblance to our own than that of any other race of intelligent creatures. But when we come actually to this world, and men are the subjects of our thoughts, we know our ground completely; and can compare the descriptions and fictitious representations of the nature and condition of man, with the plain standard fact. It should be added, that our knowledge of what are called the laws of matter, reaches far further into the universe than our knowledge of the economy of intelligent existences: and therefore we may be allowed to make very confident assertions respecting, for instance, the qualities and powers of fire and water, in the remotest and most singular world in which those elements exist, while we might be exceedingly diffident and limited in our guesses concerning the supposed intelligent inhabitants of that world.

Now this degree of knowledge which we have acquired of the physical and moral order of the creation, has become a standard of probability for the works of imagination. If those fictions conform to the arrangements of this order, as far as they are ascertained, or reasonably inferred from general principles, they are pronounced probable; but if in contrariety to these arrangements, they must be pronounced—not improbable merely, but absurd:—except, indeed, when they are legitimately representing what we call miracles; and

as miracles are the works of God only—the *true* God—they can never be legitimately represented as operations of fictitious and Pagan divine powers. Improbable fictions, we repeat, should be held absurd: for, surely, the actual economy of the creation, as arranged by its Author, must be the grand prototype of wise and beautiful design—of all the adaptation, proportions, and congruities constituting or conducing to the perfection of the whole system of existence. Indeed there could be no other model from which to draw our ideas of proportion, adaptation, harmony, and whatever else is meant by the term order, than this created system, unless the Creator had revealed another model, an ideal model, existing in his infinite mind, widely different from the actual creation. We, therefore, cannot represent material and intellectual existences of a nature, or in relations and combinations, inconsistent with the known laws of the creation, without violating the only true principles of order which it is possible for us to conceive. This we are forced practically to acknowledge in all our judgments on the propriety or absurdity of the creations of fancy; for it is to these laws that we necessarily advert in pronouncing the representations made by the imagination in dreaming, delirium, and insanity, to be absurd; and it is only on their authority that we can pronounce anything absurd, except what involves a metaphysical contradiction. Unless the absolute authority of these laws are acknowledged, it shall be perfectly reasonable for a poet to represent a race of people made of steel, or half steel half flesh—or human heads, as in the illuminations of old manuscripts, growing on twigs of trees—or one man making himself into eight, like Kehama, and then returning into one again—or fire and water in perfect amity. It is, in short, only in deference to these laws of the creation, that we can be excused for refusing our respect and admiration to the infinite puerility and monstrosity of the Hindoo poets as they are called. Now a very considerable portion of the fictions, constituting the present poem, is constructed in utter defiance of this standard. The whole affair of the operation of the curse, the story of Lorrinite, the origination of the Ganges, the fire and water palace of Indra, the adventures of Mount

Calasay, the transactions and creatures of Padalon, with much more that has been noticed in the analysis, are things of a nature not only in perfect contrariety to the state and laws of the actual creation, but incompatible with any economy of which we can conceive the *possible* existence. A strong, an irresistible impression of flagrant absurdity will, therefore, be the predominant perception of every reader incapable of a temporary abolition of his reason. The disgust at this absurdity will be so very active a feeling, and will be so seldom suffered by the poet to subside, that it will, at many parts of the work, almost wholly preclude the pleasure that would else be imparted by the splendid scenery and eloquent diction by which even the grossest of the absurdities are attempted to be made imposing. We may wonder, in very simplicity, why the poet should choose deliberately to labour to excite at once the two opposite sentiments of pleasure and disgust, with the knowledge, too, that any attempt to prolong them both is infallibly certain to end in the ascendancy of the latter. Or does he really think the beauties of his composition are so transcendent, that they will banish all recollection about probability and improbability, or fairly vanquish the repugnance of cultivated minds to gross absurdity? And if he *could* do this, what would be the value of the achievement? What has been the grand object and utility of observing, of investigating, of philosophizing through all ages, but to put mankind in possession of TRUTH, and to discipline their minds to love truth, to think according to the just laws of thinking, and to hate all fallacy and absurdity; in short, to advance the human race at last, if it be possible, to something like the manhood of reason? And would it, then, be a meritorious employment of a genius that really *should* be powerful enough to counteract these exertions, and retard this progress to reduce the human mind, or any one mind, back to a state in which it could love or tolerate puerile or raving absurdity—to that very state which the generality of the orientals are in at this day, and for being in which they have (till lately their Paganism has recommended them to our favour) been the objects of our sovereign contempt? But if all our influential poetry were to be of the same character as that of

a large portion of the present work, we might justly regard the poetic tribe as a conspiracy to seduce men into a complacency with what involves a total abjuration of sense, and so to defeat the labours for maturing the human understanding,—labours, verily, of which the toil is great enough, and the success little enough, even unobstructed by such intervention.

There can be no danger, we suppose, of hearing pleaded in maintenance of the privilege of poetry to be absurd, that the scope of probability is too confined to afford sufficient variety of materials. That scope includes nothing less than all that is known of this whole world,—all that may, in strict analogy with what is known, be conjectured or fancied of it, in times past, present, and to come,—and all that can be imagined of all other worlds, without violating what we have reason to believe the principles of the order of the creation, and without contradicting any doctrine of revelation. This scope is, therefore, in the popular sense of the word, infinite; and to seek for materials which it does not include, will generally be found an indication of a feeble mind. It is quite needless to say, this remark can have no application to Mr. Southey: but it is a remark applicable to him, that such feeble minds will be glad to find and plead a warrant for their folly in the example of a strong one.

After all, it would be foolish to affect any great degree of apprehension for the public taste, from the perverting operation of one, or any number of works, attempting to reconcile it to the kind and excess of absurdity exhibited in this poem, even if all such works had all the poetical excellence so conspicuous in this. There is a point in the improvement both of individuals and communities, after which they cannot be even amused to more than a certain latitude; if we may so express it, from the line of their reason.

The next chief point of censure would be, that this absurdity is also *Paganism*; but this has been noticed so pointedly and repeatedly in our analysis, that a very few words here will suffice. There are Marriataly, Pollcar, Kama, Indra, Veeshnoo, Seeva, Padalon, the Swerga, &c., celebrated in the most Christianized country of Europe, by a native poet. Now if these had been merely the fictions

of his own mind, and not parts of a heathen mythology, even then they would have been, as they are here managed, an unpardonable violation of religious rectitude. For (the truth of the religion of the Bible being assumed) the poet has no right to frame, with a view to engage our complacency in, such a fictitious economy of divine and human beings as, if it could be real, would constitute the negation or extinction of that religion. But the present fiction, so far and so long as the force of poetry (which the poet would have augmented indefinitely if he could) can render the illusion prevalent on the mind, is not only the making void of the true religion, and the substitution of another and a vile theology in its place: it is no less than the substitution of a positive and notorious system of Paganism. It vacates the eternal throne, not only in order to raise thither an imaginary divinity, but absolutely to elevate Seeva, the adored abomination of the Hindoos. He is as much and as gravely attempted to be represented as a reality, as he could be by the poets of those heathens themselves. And, as if on purpose to preclude the officiousness of any friend that might wish to palliate or justify this proceeding, by the old pretendedly philosophical allégation, that this is only accommodating so far to another division of the human race, as to apply the name under which *they* worship a supreme being, to the Supreme Being that *we* somewhat more intelligently worship,—as if expressly to forbid any such apology, and to give proof that what he is endeavouring to gain a place for in our minds is genuine and formal heathenism, he has given an equally grave semblance of reality to a variety of other gods as well as Seeva, and to the Pagan heaven and hell. These, at any rate, are disclaimed even by that irreligious philosophy that insults revelation with the pretence that it may be, in truth, the same divine Essence that is worshipped “by saint, by savage, or by sage” under the varied denominations of “Jehovah, Jove, Lord,” or Seeva. These systematic appendages and connexions, therefore, verify the Paganism of the whole theology of this poem. And to this paganism, the poet has most earnestly laboured, as we have before observed and shown, to transfer what is peculiar to the true theology. Expressions of awful reverence, and ascriptions

of divine attributes to Seeva, are uttered by the poet in his own person; he studies most solicitously to give every appearance and every epithet of dignity to the worship represented as rendered to the gods by Ladurlad, Kailyal, and Ereenia; and the fidelity to this devotion at length attains an eternal reward. Now we have only to ask, What was the impression which the poet wished all these combined and co-operating representations to make on the reader's mind? He will not say, nor any one for him, that he was unaware that a certain moral effect necessarily accompanies all striking representations of moral agents, and that all he reckoned on, in a work of great and protracted effort, was to present simply a series of images, chasing one another away, like those in a magic lanthorn, or like the succession of clouds in the sky, making no impression on the mind but merely that of their splendour, beauty, or monstrosity. Aware then of a moral effect, and intending it, did he design that effect should be hostile in the severest manner to heathenism? Throughout this exhibition of gods, providences, devotions, heavens, and hells, was it a leading purpose to make the reader detest the fancies about Indra and Seeva, and the Swerga and Padalon, and pray that such execrable delusions might be banished from those millions of minds in which they are entertained as something more than poetry? For any purpose of this kind, the means, evidently, would not be at all of the nature of those he has employed. He most clearly had no intention that his Seeva, his Indra, his Yama, his Baly, and so forth, should appear to the reader in the full odiousness, or any degree of the odiousness, of the character of false gods; and that the reader should recoil with abhorrence at all his devotional sentiments towards these divinities. But it is then to be believed, that he was content or desirous that his bold conceptions, his fine painting, his rich language, should lend the whole of that powerful assistance which he knows such things contribute, by necessary association, in behalf of whatever they are employed to exhibit and embellish—to render false gods and their worship, and so much more of a most execrable system of Paganism as the poem allowed room for admitting, agreeable objects to the reader's imagination, and as far as possible

interesting to his affections? We do not see how the poet is to be acquitted of this, unless, as we observed before, we could suppose so absurd a thing, as that he should regard his work as a mere piece of scenery, displaying fine colours and strange shapes, without any moral tendency at all. It is possible our author may have in his own mind some mode of explaining and justifying such a conduct, and that without a rejection of rational theism or revealed religion; with either of which degrees of disbelief we are very far from thinking he is chargeable. But the very least that a Christian critic can say in such a case is, that no man, *rightly* impressed with the transcendent idea of a Supreme Being, and with the unspeakable folly and danger of trifling with the purity and integrity, and sporting away, in any the smallest degree, the awfulness of that idea, could have written this work, or can read it without displeasure and regret.

It was to be foreseen that sooner or later, one of the many enterprises of genius would be a very formal and strenuous attempt to confer English popularity on the Hindoo gods. It was a thing not to be endured, that, while we are as proud as Kehama of possessing India, we should not be able to bring to the augmentation of our national splendour that which India itself deems its highest glory, its mythology. And since the attempt *was* to be made, we should be very glad it has been made by a poet, whose failure will be a permanent proof and monument of the utter desperateness of the undertaking—if we did not regret that so much genius should have been sacrificed to such a contemptible purpose. The grave part of the regret is of the same kind with that which affects us at seeing Sir Thomas More surrender his life in devout assertion of the infallibility and universal spiritual dominion of an impious impostor, called the Pope. But there mingles with this regret the same strong perception of the ludicrous, as we should feel in seeing a fine British fleet, in full equipment and appointment, sent out to India just for the purpose of bringing back, each ship, a basket of the gods of crockery, or some portions of that material with which the Lama of Thibet is reported to enrich the craving hands of his devotees, and at length coming into the Channel with flags flying, and their cannon thundering, in celebration of the cargo. Or if the reader has not enough

of similes, we would compare the poet to an artist who, if such a thing were possible in any other art than poetry, should make choice of the most offensive substances, to be moulded with the utmost delicacy and beauty of workmanship, into forms which should excite a violent contest between the visual and olfactory senses, in which, however, the latter would be sure to be victorious.

After these observations on what we think the two mortal sins of this performance, absurdity and irreverence, subordinate remarks cannot claim room for an extension of this overgrown article. There is not anything that can properly be called *character* in the work. Kehama is a personage so monstrous that nothing extravagant could be said to be out of character in him. There is much ability evinced in giving Ladurlad more of what we can sympathize with, more of purely *human* dignity, amiableness, and distress than would have been supposed practicable in a representation of human beings under such strange and impossible circumstances. We need not say one word more of the wonderful power of description displayed in every part of the poem. It appears with unabated vigour in the concluding canto or section, which exhibits Padalon, the Hindoo hell. This exhibition, however, has a kind of coarse hideousness, which would be very remote from anything awful or sublime, even if it included much less of the clumsy, uncouth monstrosity of the Hindoo fables; and if the measureless power and terrors of Kehama, and his making himself into eight terrible gods, did not appear so insipidly and irksomely foolish. There is too much sameness of fire, steel, and adamant; and there is in the whole scene a certain *flaring nearness*, which allows no retirement of the imagination into wide, and dubious, and mysterious terrors. This puts it in unfortunate contrast with the infernal world of Milton, and the difference is somewhat like that between walking amidst a burning town, and in a region of volcanoes. We must not bring, even into thought, any sort of comparison between the display of mind in Milton's infernal personages and those of Padalon.

The general diction of the work is admirably strong, and various, and free; and, in going through it, we have repeatedly exulted in the capabilities of the English lan-

guage. The author seems to have in a great measure grown out of that affected simplicity of expression, of which he has generally been accused. The versification, as to measure and rhyme, is a complete defiance of all rule and all example; the lines are of any length, from four syllables to fourteen; there are sometimes rhymes and sometimes none; and they have no settled order of recurrence. This is objectionable, chiefly, as it allows the poet to riot away in a wild wantonness of amplification, and at the very same time imposes on him the petty care of having the lines so printed as to put the letter-press in the form of a well-adjusted picture.

The notes comprise a large assortment of curious particulars, relating to the Eastern mythology and manners, and to natural history.

VINDICATION OF FOX'S HISTORY.

A Vindication of Mr. Fox's History of the Early Part of the Reign of James II. By SAMUEL HEYWOOD, Sergeant-at-Law. 4to. 1811.

SUPPOSING this work to be effectually what the title professes, there are several good reasons why it should be published. In the first place, it is necessary to the intellectual good order of the community that minds of pre-eminent superiority should be, by a general and established law, the objects of a respect, partaking in a certain degree of homage, and shown in a somewhat ceremonious deference. They are the natural nobility and magistracy in what may be called the economy of sense; and it is easy to foresee what will be the consequence, if they are to be subjected to such a levelling system, as that all sorts of people may venture on whatever impertinent freedoms they please,—as that every smatterer in knowledge and pretender to ability may beard them, rudely question them, contradict them, and proclaim them as ignorant or incapable. Mind itself, the noblest thing we have among us, would be insulted, and be

liable to become degraded, by this indecorous treatment of its higher specimens and exhibitions: the just rules of thinking, which can be kept in force only by a deference for the dictates and exemplifications of these superior minds, would be swept aside, the self-importance of little spirits would grow arrogant, and a general anarchy of intellect would lead to its general prostration. The prescriptive rights, therefore, of this privileged order, ought to be carefully maintained.

Doubtless this reverence for superior minds may, in some circumstances, degenerate into servility and superstition. It will be recollected, what a despotic empire over the thinking world was acquired by Aristotle. Other powerful spirits have, in different ages, established upon this veneration tyrannies, less extended and durable indeed than his, yet greatly obstructive of the free exercise and the progress of the human understanding; though it may, at the same time, be doubted whether it was not, in many instances, better to entertain those systems of notions, admitted through submission to these ascendant minds, than to be in that state of utter mental stagnation which, but for their ascendancy, would have been the condition of many of their believing devotees. But this superstitious deference to high mental powers has so far declined, from whatever causes, that nothing is now more common than to see persons of very ordinary endowments assuming with all possible assurance and self-complacency, to put themselves forward in even a contemptuous hostility to the strongest minds of the present or past times. It will be salutary, therefore, as tending to repress this arrogance, and enforce due subordination, to have now and then a signal example made of one of the offenders. And it is peculiarly equitable that the instance selected for this purpose should be that in which the great person assailed and exulted over is recently dead, and the comparatively small one assailing, enjoys immense benefits connected with his capacity of partisan.

Another good reason for the publication, if the work justifies the title, is, that it must necessarily form, by its proofs and illustrations, a valuable historical supplement to Mr. Fox's work. It must be, in effect, partly the same thing as if Mr. Fox himself had investigated each question

to its utmost minutia, had produced more authorities, and trebly fortified every assertion. The Vindicator may have fortified the statements, even more completely than the historian himself could,—having had the advantage of being directed, by the attempts of an earnest enemy, where to accumulate the means of defence. The evidence which effectually defends a work against a long laborious attack in detail, must be of an extremely specific nature; and the corroboration thus obtained is therefore of very great value. If, then, Mr. Heywood is successful, Mr. Fox's work both acquires a more decisive authority than it could be held to possess before it had sustained the attack, and annihilated the assailant, and is made, by Mr. Heywood's defensive accessions, a much ampler history of the events to which it relates. And as Mr. Fox's book is sure to be among the very first of those that will be consulted in future times, by such as shall in those times carry their retrospect so far as to the events in question, much of Mr. Heywood's auxiliary assemblage of evidence will justly claim to go down with the principal work, to confirm and to amplify its representations. Thus the work, in point of value, takes a higher and more general ground than that of being merely a defence of a particular book against the exceptions of a Mr. Rose.

Another good reason for such a publication, may perhaps be found in the necessity of checking the assumption of official men, and exciting in the nation a salutary suspicion of them. It is not seldom seen, with what an air of consequence the *general* claims of a minor public functionary shall be put forth; but he is apt to take a tone peculiarly authoritative and oracular, whenever he is pleased to pronounce upon questions demanding the kind of knowledge and of judgment supposed to be acquired among exact details and minute records. He assumes, as a thing admitting no dispute, that, in his official capacity, he is the perfection of accuracy; and, on the strength of this assumption, confidently claims credit for the same virtue in any extra-official application of his knowledge. And there is among mankind an extreme willingness to yield to such men this credit for accuracy, both in matters within their office and in matters without it. This facility of confiding arises partly from indolence, partly from want of the means

of judging, and partly from that reverence of government, through all its branches, which has always been one of the most prominent features of the human character. Now, if it be really true, as many shrewd observers of human nature and of men in place, have asserted, that there is, after all, no security against many and great errors in the arrangements, reckonings, and statements of these men, without the constant interference of a suspicious vigilance on the part of those whose affairs they administer,—it may be very useful, as tending both to recover the people from this blind confidence, and to check the assurance that demands it, that, when any one of these official men ventures out from the shaded and the guarded sanctuary of state, where he is but very imperfectly within reach of scrutiny, and takes a ground where he can be subjected to a full and public examination,—it may be very useful for some keen inquisitor to seize upon him, and put to a severe test this public, ostentatious, and challenging display of his virtue of exquisite accuracy; which he himself cannot disown to be a very fair specimen of his *general* accuracy, and an illustration of his *official* accuracy, when he professes that it is from the official cultivation of this virtue, that so much of it comes to appear in the extra-official performance.

We will name only one more of the good effects likely to attend such a work, and making it desirable. It may serve as a warning that no man, in or out of office, who is not very sure he is a superior man to Mr. Rose, should write (or at least should publish if he has written), a polemical quarto in the spare hours of a very few weeks; or that, at any rate, if he is under the compulsion of fate to perform such an operation within such a time, it should not be against another book of little more than the same bulk, on which one of the strongest minds in the world has expended about the same number of years that the said assailant can afford weeks. Or, if any man should ever again be under the power and malice of fate even to this whole melancholy extent, the warning may, at the very least of all, be of service so far as to raise him from that last worst spite of his evil fortune, that would make him go through this task with an air of the most honest and lively self-congratulation on performing a victorious exploit!

These, we should think, will be admitted to be very good and sober reasons (and others might be added), why the book should come before the public, if it be what it professes to be. With this admission, the reader must begin the perusal;—and by the time he comes to the conclusion, it may be difficult for him to refuse admitting also that the book *does* fulfil, with extraordinary fidelity, the promise or threat in the title. He will probably be of opinion, that he never witnessed an attack more cool, comprehensive, and effectual, nor a defeat involving a more hopeless and complete humiliation;—complete, unless it be an alleviating circumstance that it will not be insulted with pity. Mr. Rose came forward a good deal in the manner of a person called upon by duty to stop the progress of a public mischief, and remove a public nuisance. The leisure fragments of a very few weeks were all that could be spared for the purpose from his valuable time; but quite enough for the easy task of deposing Mr. Fox from the dignified rank of historian, and proving his deeply pondered judgments and carefully conducted narration, to be little better than a series of mis-statements in point of fact, applied to party purposes by prejudiced and erroneous comments. The right honourable censor, in addition to that disinterested rectitude of judgment, the want of which in Mr. Fox is condescendingly apologized for, while condemned, holds himself forth as possessing a great advantage, in having been accustomed to “official accuracy;”—and also he has the privilege of perusing sundry valuable manuscript documents. One inducement to his interference, indeed, is the wish to rescue the character of a friend’s ancestor from misrepresentation; but he also entertains the more ambitious hope, and meritorious purpose, of rendering “service to his country.” The achievement is finished. The performer has constructed for himself a proud station among the ruined labours of Mr. Fox. He receives there, and probably deems himself not much the worse for, several transient attacks. But, all this while, there is a sober, indefatigable engineer, of the name of Heywood, who has silently carried mine under this triumphal structure, and lodged his gun-powder; and while the redoubted occupant is regaling himself with the self-applause, and all the rich rewards of this

and so many other "services to his country," up in a moment goes he into the air, frisking among the fragments of his pile, the companions of his jaculation. We think no one who has a right notion of the virtue and duty of modesty in self-estimation, and considers the arrogance and contemptuous temerity of this proceeding, will feel any compassion at the catastrophe.

It will be enough to notice a few of the more remarkable points in this long course of refutation; in which every animadversion and contradiction, so confidently ventured by Mr. Rose, is distinctly brought to the test, and the critical cognizance is extended even to some of those smaller blunders and inaccuracies, which would not have been worth fixing on in a work which had not rested its pretensions on the superlative accuracy of the writer, and which had not deserved, by the arrogant manner of its hostility, to be exposed all round in the completeness of its character. There is, however, no great degree of asperity in any part of the *Vindication*, notwithstanding that the author enjoyed the personal friendship of Mr. Fox. He seems to have felt too certain of the effect of his evidence and his arguments, to need to call his temper to his assistance.

In a very long preface, he disposes of some matters touching the general qualifications of the two writers. He could not fail to be struck with the charity and innocence of the right honourable observer's excuse for Mr. Fox's inaccurate statements and erroneous reflections—"that with perfect rectitude and impartiality of intention, a man in a particular political situation can hardly form impartial opinions, because he breathes an atmosphere of party, with which the constitution and temperament of his own mind can hardly fail to be affected." As this judicious remark was doubtless uttered to be reflected back on his own self-complacency, Mr. Rose will have the benefit of possessing in the Serjeant's book, something analogous, in effect, to those remarkable walls and rocks, that are said to echo a man's words to him ten or twenty times. The reflection is sure to be repeated to him, with the most gracious and flattering effect, whenever Mr. Fox has on another, and still another instance, been proved to be equally accurate in his facts, and impartial in his observations. It serves as an

interlude, by the enchanting melodies of which Mr. Heywood soothes and dulcifies his man when he has in one instance shown him he has written just in the style of a partisan and placeman, and is going to do it in another. And sometimes in addition, he warbles him a *finale* of surpassing sweetness;—as when it is observed, that “the *subordinate* men of a party are more completely under the perverting influence in question than even the chiefs, since they are attached not only to the party by common principle, but to its leader by the still stronger ties of personal interest, gratitude, and affection.” To this perverting influence, together with that extreme inattention, either learnt, or at least not corrected, in official employment, the Vindicator is willing, on second thoughts, to ascribe the errors of Mr. Rose’s book,—for at first he could not help suspecting a less pardonable cause.

Among the first exemplifications of the excessive carelessness of that writer, are two quotations formally given in his Introduction as from the work of Mr. Fox—while the passages so quoted for animadversion do not exist in that work; the one being a sentence contained in a private letter of Mr. Fox, inserted in Lord Holland’s preface, and the other a sentence written by Lord Holland himself. And these instances of accuracy occur in that very same Introduction in which the writer, aware, he says, of the imputations his work would be liable to, on account of his political connexions, professes to be “certain that he has been more scrupulous both of his authorities and his own opinions than he might have been in commenting on the work of any other author.” Mr. Heywood then remarks on the dubious explanation of the right honourable observer’s motives for writing; and seems to have some difficulty in maintaining his gravity at the highly sentimental and pathetic emotions and professions relative to the memory of Sir Patrick Hume, who had been dead eighty-five years, and who, during his own very protracted life, had not deemed it necessary, or, as the Sergeant is rather inclined to surmise, had feared it would be unavailing to his justification, to publish the Narrative which Mr. Rose was now in such earnest haste to produce in vindication of Sir Patrick against a charge—incorrectly represented as made by Mr. Fox, but which,

whoever had made it, Mr. Heywood maintains—that Sir Patrick's own Narrative, thus produced in his exculpation, proves to be just. Spirited notice is taken of the undervaluing terms in which Mr. Rose very confidently delivers himself respecting the worth and utility of the whole of the Historical Work, and the trifling result of its author's researches for new information.

Mr. Rose having made an absolutely rectangular deviation from his road to applaud Vertot, as an historian, the Serjeant cuts across and meets him with one of the most pleasant anecdotes in literary history.

"This recommendation of Mr. Vertot by a person accustomed to official accuracy is rather extraordinary; for it is a well-known anecdote, that when his History of Malta was preparing for the press, notes of the transactions at the siege, taken by an eye-witness, being sent to him, he declined to use them, saying, '*Mon siege est fait.*'"

The beginning of the first section asserts, argumentatively, the just discrimination with which Mr. Fox divides the periods of our history at which the mind is disposed to pause for reflection. Among the marks or effects of national improvement, in the period comprised between 1588 and 1640, the historian has noted "the additional value that came to be set on a seat in the House of Commons." The observer has taken the word "value" here to mean "the money it would bring;" and to prove that the value set on the thing, in the period in question, was pitifully low, has cited an instance of five pounds being given for a seat in 1571. Mr. Heywood observes that Mr. Fox certainly was not thinking of a market-price of a thing that cannot legally be sold, but of the more honourable estimation in which the House was beginning to be held; but that even if he had meant a pecuniary price, the low rate of the article in 1571, could be no proof it might not have come to bear a very good price, by or before the end of the period, in 1640. The point, however, in which this argument bears the special characteristic of its author is, that, whereas the sum stated is five pounds, and the record cited is the fifth volume of the Journals, the sum was actually *four* pounds, and the record is in the *first* volume.

judgment pronounced by Mr. Fox on the condem-

nation and execution of Charles I., that it was both unjust and impolitic, was accompanied by some qualifying observations. He said this proceeding was "a far less violent measure" than that against Lord Strafford,—that there was a certain magnanimity in the publicity of it, which contrasted favourably for Cromwell and his adherents with the private assassinations by which deposed princes have generally been taken off,—and that, "notwithstanding what the more reasonable part of mankind many think upon the question," "this singular proceeding has served to raise the character of the English nation in the opinion of Europe in general:" the impression made by it on the minds of foreigners, even those that condemn the act, having been "far more that of respect and admiration than that of disgust and horror." In these observations, Mr. Rose found great cause for censure, and even for "astonishment." That which is to be condemned in the proceedings against Strafford, he says, consisted only in a "breach or abuse of a constitutional law;" while those against Charles involved "a total departure from, or overturning of, the constitution itself." The publicity and solemnity of the proceedings against the king, he says, could not be any alleviation of his misery, nor could on any conceivable ground, inspire foreigners with respect. And he asks, If the publicity of the proceeding in the case of Charles deserves so much applause for magnanimity, "how would Mr. Fox have found language sufficiently commendatory to express his admiration of the magnanimity of those who brought Louis XVI. to an open trial?"

With respect to the comparison between the cases of the King and Strafford, the Vindicator insists, in the first place, (not, we think, with his usual simplicity and evidence) that the historian meant a comparison, not between the respective degrees or *essential injustice* in the two cases, but between the cases viewed in that light, in which the wrong in the *mode of proceeding* against delinquents is distinguished from the excess of the punishment over the demerit. It may well be doubted whether this distinction was in Mr. Fox's contemplation. But in the next place, the Vindicator observes, unanswerably, that as to "overturning the constitution," there was no such thing to over-

turn, the state of things having previously dissolved it: he might have said the king himself had abolished it, unless it was such a kind of thing as could consist with the monarch's systematic measures for rendering himself absolute. To the charge of extenuating the injustice by ascribing magnanimity to the publicity of the proceeding, it is replied, that it was with this fact of the publicity before him that Mr. Fox did, notwithstanding, condemn the prosecution and execution of the king, and clearly did not, in adverting to it, intend to represent the proceeding as less unjust: that, however, there is, from the principles of our nature, and without our leave, something more horrid in the dark management of a secret assassination than in a public sentence and execution, even when unjust,—and that Charles did himself express an extreme apprehension and horror of the former: that, as contrasted with this treacherous and silent expedient usually resorted to by the deponents of monarchs, there *was* a degree of magnanimity in conducting the whole proceedings in view of the whole world; that even Hume has expressed himself in still stronger terms to the same effect; and that as to the admiration of foreigners, Mr. Fox asserts it simply as a matter of fact, which no man had ampler means of knowing, but as to which he also appeals to all who have read their books and extensively conversed with them.

The allusion to Louis XVI. calls forth a zealous and prolonged exertion of the Vindicator, giving him at the same time all the advantage of an assailant. He considers the expressions as not only equivalent to an assertion that, on the principles implied in the Observations on the case of Charles, Mr. Fox *might* consistently express the utmost admiration of the proceedings against the King of France, but as directly importing that he actually *would* have expressed such a sentiment had he spoken on the subject. Mr. Heywood suggests several grounds on which the injustice against Charles might admit of an extenuation, of which that against Louis did not. But not resting anything on this mode of defence, he goes to the plain fact—that Mr. Fox did repeatedly, in the most explicit and feeling manner, express abhorrence of the injustice and inhumanity committed in the trial and death of the French king; and

formal citations, emphatically expressing this judgment on the case, are brought from several of his speeches in parliament, some or all of which Mr. Rose must actually have heard. The defence in this part has a tone of indignation to which the *Vindicator* is very rarely excited.

The character of Monk, in the estimate of which Mr. Fox is charged with having exercised a "severity neither supported by popular belief, nor by the authority of history," is next brought under discussion. It is prosecuted to a very great length, with eminent proofs of research and acuteness, and will put an end, we should think, to all serious dispute on the subject. He begins with a pointed reproof to the writer of the *Observations*, for invidiously seeking and making occasions of fixing on Mr. Fox the imputation of such a partiality to republicanism, as incapacitated him for a just representation of the events and characters of the period he had chosen. Mr. Fox's plainest expressions are shown to be grossly misquoted for this purpose. Nor can he do the mere historical justice of placing Cromwell's character in a fairer light than that of Monk, without drawing on himself such a comment as this: "It will require a great partiality for a republican form of government, to account for this predilection in favour of the destroyer of monarchy, and this prejudice against the restorer of it;"—an imputation the convenient operation of which, as affecting the character of an author and his book, in these times, so far as it is believed, Mr. Rose understood perfectly well. Commend him, however, to the Sergeant.

"Mr. Rose here exhibits the same childish partiality for kings which had been reprobated by Mr. Fox in the writings of Mr. Hume. According to him, the meanest of mankind, if a restorer of monarchy, is to be preferred to the possessor of the greatest mind and talents, if a destroyer of it. Mr. Fox thought more philosophically; he felt neither predilection for the one, nor prejudice against the other, but, according to the best of his judgment, gave an impartial character of both. If Monk was a base and worthless character, it was giving no opinion of the cause in which he was engaged, to say so; and if Cromwell was a man of a superior class, it was the duty of an historian not to withhold his proper meed of praise."

The charges made by Mr. Fox against Monk are three;—

"In the first place, he reproaches him with having restored the monarch without a single provision in favour of the cause which he and others had called the cause of liberty. Mr. Rose at first endeavours to defend this omission by a series of hypothetical arguments, which, by their extreme weakness, afford a convincing proof of the truth of the observation he is combating. He argues first, that though this conduct might be regretted, yet it must be recollected that there could hardly have been time to settle the boundaries of the regal power; and secondly, that Monk might have been of opinion that the restoration of the monarchy would have implied all the limitations of its ancient constitution; but what these limitations were, or where to be sought for, Mr. Rose has not informed us. Certainly not in the history of the reigns of the two preceding princes of the house of Stuart; and surely Monk cannot be supposed by Mr. Rose, who has lived the greatest part of his life among records, to have formed any opinion of the limitations which existed during the time of our Anglo-Saxon ancestors. Thirdly, that Monk might have thought any delay would have been dangerous. Fourthly, that he might have been less anxious in this respect, from his having been witness of the abuse of liberty. And afterwards Mr. Rose gives what he supposes to be two additional reasons, but which are in fact included in the foregoing ones, viz., that Monk might have been so disgusted with the scenes he had been witness to, as to be willing to give his assistance to bring about any change likely to restore order; and that he might have been alarmed lest the army should not have co-operated in his designs." "That Monk might have defended himself by these arguments is certainly within the sphere of possibility, but is highly improbable. He had complete power over the army; it was governed by his creatures, and was subservient to his will. If he had proposed that the crown, under certain restrictions, should be offered to the king, there was no existing power to oppose it."

The infamy of Monk is consummated by the last charge, if just, which the historian makes against him, of having, at the trial of the Marquis of Argyle, "produced letters of friendship and confidence to take away the life of a nobleman, the zeal and cordiality of whose co-operation with him, proved by such documents, was the chief ground of his execution." Mr. Rose observes, that this charge rests on the authority of Bishop Burnet; and then relates the history of a most prodigious research made by himself into all manner of documents and memorials, the result of which is, he says,

that, "it is hardly possible to conceive that stronger evidence could be found in any case to establish a negative than is here produced to prove the falsehood of the Bishop's charge." In a very long and argumentative examination of the question, Mr. Heywood has shown that other authorities support the Bishop in this charge, though it is insisted that his testimony alone would be of great weight. But a coinciding deposition is made by two good evidences, Baillie and Cunningham, the former of whom was contemporary with the event, and writes in a manner that proves him to have been very attentive to its circumstances, and interested in it; the other, though he lived after it, was intimate with the Argyle family, and in a situation to obtain the best information on the subject. Baillie says, "When his (the Marquis's) libelled crimes appeared not unpardonable, and his son Lord Neil went up to see his brother Lorne at London, and spake somewhat liberally of his father's satisfactory answers, *Monk was moved to send down four or five of his letters to himself, and others proving his full compliance with them*, that the king should not reprove him." Cunningham says, "Argyle, conceiving hopes of safety, set out for London, and came to court to cast himself upon the king's clemency. But, *through the interference of Monk*, with whom he had held a long and intimate friendship in the time of Oliver, he was presently committed to custody, and sent back for his trial in Scotland. He endeavoured to make his defence, but *chiefly by the discoveries of Monk*, was condemned of high treason and lost his head." It is an extremely curious circumstance that Mr. Rose did not take the trouble to look into these authors, even after he had read Mr. Laing's reference to them as corroborating the testimony of Burnet. To complete the force of this combination of testimony, the Vindicator proves, by a copious and clear induction, that the situations and employments of Monk and Argyle, in Cromwell's time, were such that it was almost impossible but there must have been confidential epistolary communications between them; and then brings such evidence of baseness in Monk's conduct, after the Restoration, towards other of his recent friends and coadjutors, as to authorize a belief, even on much lighter proof than that adduced, of the particular instance of villany

imputed by Mr. Fox. It is proper to notice, that an additional and absolutely decisive proof,* has been supplied by a periodical work in commenting on Mr. Heywood's book.

The Sergeant next traverses, very minutely, Mr. Rose's statements and reasonings relative to the point of time proper to be fixed on, as that at which our constitution had attained its "greatest theoretical perfection." Such a point (and it was the year 1679), had been named by Judge Blackstone. Mr. Fox named it after him; *accepting* this precise selection, for the purpose of making a reflection on the inefficacy of good laws in the hands of bad administrators, rather than adopting it as any expression of his own deliberate opinion as to the period of "theoretical perfection." Our author, however, takes one by one, those several laws which the judge and Mr. Fox had specified as constituting the excellence to which the constitution had attained at the period mentioned, and defends, quite successfully in some of the instances, the approbation with which the historian had marked them.

Mr. Rose contends, also, that the blame of restoring the king without restrictions on his power is not to rest on Monk alone:—for, that the king was thus unconditionally called by a parliament freely chosen by the people of England;—that the nation was eager for this event, even on these terms,—insomuch that the interest which might be supposed to be created against *any* restoration by the possession, among no less than four hundred thousand families, of the Crown and Bishops' lands, which had been sold during the Civil War, had no perceptible operation; that whoever had proposed limitations would have been in hazard of being considered an enemy to royalty: and that there was not in this juncture time for deliberation, as there was, happily at the Revolution.

In answer to all these allegations, the Sergeant shows that the whole affair was absolutely at the sovereign disposal of the army, which was at the sovereign disposal of Monk. He

* From "Mackenzie's Criminals." This proof is also to be found adduced with a reference to Mr. Rose's Observations, in a note of M. Howell's, in a recent volume of "Cobbett's State Trials."

shows that this general had the irresistible control over the composition, the proceedings, and the duration, of this same unbiased assembly, which so perfectly and independently represented the collective will of the nation. He shows that the conscious impotence and the despondency of the people, will fully account for their making no active display of opinion on the subject; and that it is utterly absurd to pretend to believe, that he would have incurred their disapprobation by proposing to insist on conditions in favour of their liberties. He shows, however, that there were persons (some of them of high rank), bold enough to agitate it—among whom was Mr. (afterwards Sir Matthew) Hale, who made, even in this miserable parliament, a proposition for discussing the desirable limitations, which proposition was instantly quashed by the immediate personal interference of Monk, who had been for some time in a negotiation with the exiled monarch to restore him unfettered by stipulations. As to the difference between the Restoration and the Revolution, with regard to the time allowed for deliberation and adjustment, we will quote Mr. Heywood's statement:—

“ At the Revolution, James fled on the 11th of December, and William and Mary accepted the crown on the 13th of February following, so that thirty-three days only could be employed in settling the constitution, and consulting the wishes of those to whom the regal power was to be committed. At the Restoration, a much longer time elapsed, from the period when Monk is supposed, by some, to have entertained sentiments favourable to monarchy, and the time when the king was in fact restored; but at all events, twenty-eight days elapsed between the open declaration of his sentiments, made on the 1st of May, 1660, and the king's return to the seat of government.”

Extreme credulity, and several blunders in the statement of particular facts, are exposed, in the remarks on Mr. Rose's argument from the number of families possessed of the ecclesiastical and crown lands. It is proved, that, according to that very authority on which alone Mr. Rose can rest his assertion (an anonymous party pamphlet), he ought to have made the number much greater, even so great as must prove that authority to be utterly worthless. And Mr. Heywood quotes the precise words of a letter of Lord Clarendon, as follows:—

"I am not so much frightened with the fear of those persons who being possessed of church, crown, and delinquents' lands, will be thereby withheld from returning to their duty, except they might be assured to retain the same. First, I do not think the number so considerable of all those who are entangled in that guilt, that their interests can continue or support the war, when the nation shall discern that there is nothing else keeps off peace." Afterwards he again says expressly, "the number of those is not great."

And in a letter to his lordship, from Mr. Barwick, it is asserted, "by computation, less than a year's tax would now redeem all the land that hath been sold of all sorts, which, upon the refreshment the kingdom will be sensible of at first upon his majesty's return, may possibly be granted."

The Vindicator has taken, by the way, a dexterous advantage of the right honourable observer's indiscretion, in defending Charles's assumption of the throne without restrictions on his power, on the ground that he was thus placed on it by the will of the people, as declared by a representative convention, "elected," as he asserts, "by the unbiassed voice." It is hinted to him, somewhat irritively, that a strenuous anti-republican should here have taken very particular care what he was about.

Among the proofs of the baseness of Monk's character, it was asserted by Mr. Fox that he "acquiesced in the insults so meanly put upon the illustrious corpse of Blake, under whose auspices and command he had performed the most creditable services of his life." Nothing will be easier to the historian's assailant than to dispose of this accusation. "The story rests," says he, "on the authority of Neal's History of the Puritans; and is refuted by Grey in his impartial examination of that history, and by clear evidence adduced by Bishop Kennet." He will have it that the corpse of Blake "was with great decency re-interred in St. Margaret's church-yard," though those of Cromwell, Ireton, and some others, were ignominiously treated. Mr. Heywood has shown, first, that Mr. Rose appears to be entirely ignorant of the fact that the body of Blake was not dug up till many months after those of Cromwell, Ireton, Bradshaw, and Pride: and next, that the "story," as believed by Mr. Fox, does *not* rest on the authority of Neal alone,

for that Anthony Wood, an evidence beyond all exception in this case, thus relates the fact, in his *Fasti Oxonienses*: "His body (that of Blake), I say, was then (September 12th) taken up, and, with others *buried in a pit in St. Margaret's church-yard* adjoining, near to the back-door of one of the prebendaries of Westminster, in which place it now remaineth, enjoying no other monument but what it reared by his valour, which time itself can hardly efface." Wood naturally chose the smoothest terms he could, in relating such an act done under the authority of the restored monarchy; but his words convey, in effect, just the very same fact described by Neal in the terms "thrown, along with others, into one pit." Besides, as Mr. Heywood justly observes, the circumstance of the body being dug up was, in itself, a gross and mean insult, and enough to justify Mr. Fox's expressions.

But whatever be the fortunes of historian or judge, it is sure always to be bad times with Mr. Rose; and the worse, the more he enters into details and records, in rash confidence of the accuracy so boastfully pretended to have been acquired in official employments. He could not well have been safer, than in legal and parliamentary history. While working about there, he was as secure against any ordinary power of sight, and search, and seizure, as those active molesters of our granaries which have their retreats and walks within the walls and under the floors—where nothing less keen and adroit than a ferret can find them, fight them, and bring them out. But even there this cruel and relentless investigator reaches him. For instance, if Mr. Rose is resolved to claim the merit of having detected two errors in Lord Coke, the Serjeant is very quickly upon him with an admonition to thank Mr. Prynne for the detection of one of these errors, if it was an error, a hundred and fifty years ago, in a book which Mr. Rose had before him. As to the other instance of detection, in which a proposition of Lord Coke was to be proved by Mr. Rose to be erroneous by means of the language of a statute of Edward VI., Mr. Heywood shows him that he does not understand, in this case at least, the legal parliamentary language; that Coke was perfectly accurate; and that, as the Serjeant tells him, "a little learning is a dangerous thing."

Yet again. The abolition of the Court of Wards, an institution erected in the reign of Henry VIII., by virtue of which, according to Mr. Rose's statement, "the king had the wardship of all infant heirs male, with the benefit of their estates, till they arrived at the age of twenty-one years; and of female heirs till they were sixteen years of age, if they so long remained unmarried; and the power of marrying both the one and the other to whom he pleased, or of granting the same to any favourite, together with a year's or half-a-year's rent, on their coming of age, for their relief"—the abolition of this court being mentioned by Mr. Fox among the things contributing to make the reign of Charles II., "the era of good laws,"—Mr. Rose, allowing it was a great relief to the upper classes, says it was obtained, however, at no small price; the commutation being a grant to the king of a perpetual excise, "which was so far from being generally approved of, that the question in favour of it was carried by the friends of government by a majority of only two." Now it was appointed for Mr. Rose and his readers to learn, from the Sergeant, that it was the "moiety only of a perpetual excise, on certain articles," that was granted, and that this was granted "*without a division*." "An attempt was made to settle the other moiety on the king for life, and negatived by the opponents of government by a *majority of two*, 151 to 149, which must be the division to which Mr. Rose has alluded." Well may the Sergeant ask, "With the Journal before him, how can such a mistake be accounted for? He takes the proper pains to inform himself; the entry is a short one, yet in the attempt to transfer its substance to another piece of paper, something totally dissimilar to the original is produced."

Sometimes the Sergeant amuses himself—for it is no more than pleasantry—with making out plausible appearances that Mr. Rose is more republican in his notions than the historian, notwithstanding all his pains taken to make invidious imputations of this nature to that writer. He is brought into ludicrous contrast with himself on this point, by Mr. Heywood's remarks on his strong dissent from Mr. Fox's and Judge Blackstone's opinion, in numbering among the things conducing to the perfection of the constitution at the period alluded to, the bill which repealed an enactment

of the Long Parliament for empowering parliament to convoke themselves independently of the will of the king; an enactment which Mr. Fox thought an injurious infringement of the royal prerogative.

The observer has contested the Historian's assertion, when speaking of Charles II.'s ministry, notorious by the denomination of the Cabal, that "the king kept from them the real state of his connexion with France; and from *some of them*, at least, the secret of what he was pleased to call his religion." The Vindicator soon confirms this assertion by good evidence. But, seldom content merely to defend Mr. Fox, he is apt to find some means of taking a signal revenge. In the present instance he is immoderately barbarous. For Mr. Rose having cited, somewhat in the tone of triumph, a letter of Barillon to Louis, in proof that this Cabal ministry were fully apprized of Charles's money transactions with the French king, the Sergeant comes in, much like a Cherokee with his tomahawk, with this effective segment of chronology—that Barillon did not come to England, to write his letters, till seven years after 1676, the period of which Mr. Fox was speaking, and that they were written, concerning the contemporary ministers, a number of years, as their dates show, *after the Cabal ministry had ceased to exist.*

The imputed agency of Clarendon in the base money transactions between Charles and Louis was alluded to in terms of reserve and uncertainty by Mr. Fox. The charge was made in the most full and positive form by the observer. What evidence there is on the subject has been carefully examined, and is clearly stated by Mr. Heywood; and the effect of it is, not, perhaps, wholly to exculpate the minister, but materially to modify the charge, though it leaves still in doubt what was the full extent of his participation.

The next controverted question which occupied so considerable a portion of Mr. Rose's book, and occupies a much larger space in Mr. Heywood's, is, whether or not James intended the substitution of Popery to Protestantism, as the established national religion. The author has pursued the argument round the widest extent of evidence, from documents and from circumstances, and does appear to have

come to the conclusion, with a very preponderating probability, that James was not in the earlier part of his reign, projecting anything more, in favour of the Catholic religion, than its complete toleration. The letters of Barillon, which have been considered and cited by Mr. Rose as affording decisive proof that this monarch designed the establishment of popery, become, under the more accurate examination of Mr. Heywood, very strong evidence of the exact contrary; since it is the *free exercise* only,—the established toleration,—of that religion, that they precisely and repeatedly mention as James's object—and, so far as religion was concerned, the king of France's object in affording him pecuniary aids. This long argument, and the topic connected with it, the invariable and predominant design of Charles the Second and James to establish themselves in a complete despotic power, lead Mr. Heywood into a series of extremely curious investigations and disclosures of the base characters and intrigues of these two sovereign personages. It is a most melancholy reflection, and it haunts a thoughtful reader throughout the exhibition, that great nations, the assemblage of millions of beings with minds, may be prostrate under, and even worship, the authority of the meanest, vilest refuse of their own nature.

But we are reminded it is time to end this article, already become, we fear, tedious and tiresome, though we have scarcely proceeded through half the Sergeant's performance, and have hardly even alluded to one principal section, in which Mr. Fox is most completely and unanswerably vindicated against the observer's imputation of injustice to Sir Patrick Hume, whose defence the right honourable author alleges as the principal object in making his book. Indeed the Vindicator's task is, throughout, accomplished with a completeness almost beyond example; and Mr. Fox now takes his rank decidedly among the most accurate of historians. We are glad of it; and may well give ourselves credit that the pleasure arises from considerations independent of all political partialities. A man in the observer's circumstances should have perceived it to be a matter of extreme delicacy to censure a work, especially a posthumous and unfinished work, of Mr. Fox. The very least that might justly be claimed in such a case was, that time should be taken for the most careful examination of the

points intended to be disputed; that some moderate degree of that solicitous balancing of evidence should be practised, for which Mr. Fox himself was represented as so remarkable; that there should be a most exemplary modesty, a cautious resistance of every temptation to boast and parade about official accuracy; and that whenever any advantage was deemed to be gained against so strong a man, it should be recollected how difficult it was to *keep* an advantage against him when he was *alive*. How much the reverse of this has been the observer's conduct we need not again remark; but never did presumption precipitate itself to a deeper fall.

We ought not to have omitted, in the preceding paragraphs, one of the most remarkable of Mr. Heywood's successes. In noticing the famous bill for the preservation of the person of king James, Mr. Fox suggests that there has been something much resembling it in later years. Mr. Rose will not allow that any such instance can be found; and yet, amidst this denial, cannot help adverting to the Act of the 18th of December, 1795. Mr. Heywood prints the two Acts beside each other; and their substance, and in the most material parts the very expressions are the same.

JESSE'S SERMONS.

Sermons on the Person and Office of the Redeemer, and on the Faith and Practice of the Redeemed. By WILLIAM JESSE, M.A. 8vo. 1812.

No literary class can be named, in which the present acting persons have less respect for their predecessors, and, we might say, for one another, than in that of sermon writers. They are perfectly aware that—without going so far back as the puritan divines, and the learned and eloquent churchmen of the latter part of the seventeenth century—a prodigious number of books of sermons have been published within the lifetime and the memory of the elder portion of readers now living. By a glance over the catalogues of two or three of the London booksellers, it might probably be seen that the shelves of nearly a whole room, of competent dimensions for a study, might be filled by the assemblage of

volumes which would be formed by single copies of all the books of sermons that have been published in English, within less than a hundred years past. Now with what estimate do the present numerous writers of sermons regard this vast accumulation of kindred performances? It is obvious, that their own multitude of volumes cannot engage so much as they wish them to do of the public attention, without an almost entire dismissal, from that attention, of these preceding labours. And why are they to be thus consigned to neglect? Is it deemed that books of this class are necessarily transitory, through some peculiar fatality, which destroys them without regard to the qualities which they may possess or want; and that therefore the reading of sermons will cease, if there be not a continued supply from authors who are, of course, resigned to the destiny under which *their* works also, in their turn, are soon to perish? Or is it, that this accumulation affords really so very few books that deserve to live,—so diminutive a portion of sound doctrine and good writing, that absolutely the relief of an insupportable destitution of religious truth and eloquence is the object of the present very rapid issue of volumes of sermons? Unless the works of the very numerous former contributors to this part of our literature, are regarded as thus necessarily fugitive, or thus indigent of the qualities indispensable to render them instructive and impressive, it may be difficult to find a plausible reason for that eagerness to publish volumes of sermons so manifest of late years. And even then, it will remain somewhat wonderful, how so very many persons have been freed from all doubt as to their own competency to carry on the course of this ~~work~~ instruction, in the best and ablest manner of those ~~who~~ have had their day, or to furnish such reasoning and eloquence, as those who have had their day are to sink into oblivion for having failed to exhibit. Some of these writers have such an estimate of themselves, and their predecessors, and even of the ~~public~~ temporaries, in the same department, that they will confess they have not taken all the pains they might to perfect their compositions. They could not in conscience say to do it, so affected were they at the view of the afflictive public want of such a book as theirs. The community had among them only some few millions of volumes of serious sermons, and were constantly receiving only a

few thousands more each month: and therefore who could be sure that souls might not "perish for lack" of the means of "knowledge," if these latest sermon writers delayed the publication of their books, in order to labour them to the greatest attainable fitness for conveying instruction?

The author of the present volume has not offended in the way of violent haste from the pulpit to the printing-office, for these Sermons are a selection from those which "he has been in the habit of writing and preaching to his parishioners during the last twenty years;" but we question whether the case will be found in every point so unexceptionable.

"He wishes the reader to understand and remember, that these Sermons were not written with any design to publish them; and, that they are presented to him as they were delivered from the pulpit. If, as compositions, they are not below what any one may expect to hear in a country church, and in a mixed congregation of people of various ranks, it may not be thought presumption in him to hope that these Sermons may be more useful to the generality of readers, than compositions intended for the critical eye of the learned."—P. 16.

This sounds like the language of apology, and, in some degree, of humility; but what does it virtually say? It says, that, while there are before the public, partly in the form of sermons, and partly of treatises, an immense number of theological books, of which number a proportion, comprising, in point of quantity, more than most men will ever have time to read, are of excellent tendency, and were matured with deliberate study, by able men, who made a patient and earnest exertion to display the subjects with the utmost possible clearness and force—it says that Mr. Jesse, quite aware of all this, thinks there is nothing like arrogance in calling on readers to employ a share of the time due to such works, in perusing a volume of such sermons as he is in the habit of preparing for the weekly services of his parish;—strict care being taken that, having been intended only for this use, they do not undergo any improvement when selected for a higher.

Nor is this all. He thinks that printed instructions, brought out in this manner, may even be "more useful to the generality of readers" than compositions intended for learned and critical ones;—not meaning, we presume, more

useful than they would have been if they had contained direct matters of learning and criticism; that is too flatly evident to be worth saying; but more useful to them than they would have been if the *general tenor* of the composition had been intended to satisfy the "critical eye." Here we shall be allowed to ask, *what* is it that the "critical eye of the learned" demands in a theological composition, when direct learning and criticism are out of the question? What is it, but a definite general statement of the subject? What, but a lucid natural order in the series of explanations? What, but perfect conception in each of the thoughts, and clear expression in each of the sentences, together with such a connexion in the succession of thoughts and sentences, as to make them all intelligibly and forcibly lead to the intended point? And are not these properties of a composition which the critical reader *requires*, the very things which the "generality of readers" *need*? Is it not the first object, and a most difficult one, to give those readers a clear *understanding* of the subject? And the way to do this is, to treat it in such a mode of composition as a truly "critical eye" would perceive to have the primary qualities of *good* composition. We have met with not a few occasions of indulging some degree of wonder at a notion, that less careful labour is necessary in writing, in proportion as the expected readers are less disciplined by learning and criticism! As if their not having been accustomed to accurate thinking, rendered them just so much the more capable of deriving clear ideas from negligent writing.

On the whole of this matter, we think it is not easy, in the present circumstances of literature, to be guilty of an excess, in censuring that presumptuous contempt of higher examples, that low valuation of people's time, and that indifference, in part at least, to the purpose professed—their instruction—which are manifested in coming on the public with compositions, executed in a hasty and imperfect manner, and accompanied by an avowal, in effect, that the instruction of the readers was not deemed an object to make it worth while to attempt any improvement in those compositions. It is really quite time for the writers of sermons to be admonished, that when they are resolving on publication, they should condescend to admit such a sense of the extent of their duty, as would be impressed by reflecting a

few moments, what *other* sermons in the language the persons to be instructed *might* be reading, during the time they are expected to employ in reading the volumes now to be presented to them: and we cannot think a very lenient language is due to writers who have never made this reflection, or have evidently disdained to profit by it.

The unusual length of the preface to this volume seemed to intimate that there must be something peculiar, and requiring preparatory explanation, in the design or execution; and we presumed that an attentive perusal of it would qualify us to go forward. We must confess, however, that in more than one attentive reading, we failed to reach the meaning. It is a most confused attempt to distinguish between "essential truths" and "subordinate truths," in the Christian religion, and to instruct contemporary preachers to dwell much more, than it is believed they do, on the former class. These "essential truths" are limited, in some undefined or ill-defined way, to "the doctrines concerning the Person and Office of the Redeemer," those doctrines being, as far as we are enabled to conjecture, so understood as to exclude, and consign to the subordinate class, the greatest number of the truths declared in the scriptures;—so understood as to exclude doctrines which must constitute much of the practical meaning of the term *office*, as applied to the Messiah. For instance, the doctrine of justification by faith is specified as not being one of the "essential truths;" and we find in the "subordinate" class the doctrine of "that great defect in our common nature, as destitute of the spirit of holiness, and prone in all its tendencies to earthly things," and of "our utter insufficiency, without the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, to will and do anything which is spiritually good." And though such "subordinate truths" are allowed to have their importance, it is represented that what is essentially the gospel may be effectually apprehended without them.

• "He that rightly apprehends the personal character and office of the Redeemer, may be wise unto salvation, though he be ignorant of everything else; or, though he knew little or nothing distinctly of the subordinate truths, or mistakes their meaning."—P. 6.

As if the office of the Redeemer were something substantive and absolute, instead of a *relation* which he has assumed to

the human race, the nature and effect of which relation are defined or explained by a combination of those doctrines which would here be denominated subordinated. It is very much at hazard, however, that we make any attempt at stating the import of this long preface.

The reader will be freed in a good measure from this difficulty of understanding, when he advances into the Sermons themselves, which are on the following subjects:—The Antiquity, Importance, and Truth of the Doctrine of Salvation—Isaiah's Prophecy of the Saviour's Advent—the Birth of Jesus Christ—Calling his name Jesus—the Humility of Christ—Christ our great High Priest—the scriptural Doctrine of Redemption—a Resurrection of the Dead, the Doctrine of both the Testaments—the Resurrection of Christ and ours equally certain—Our Saviour's Ascension into Heaven—preaching Christ crucified—the unchangeable Friend—the Author of eternal Salvation to them that obey Him—the True Vine—the Divine Mercy, and the Christian Temper and Conduct—Christian Practice—Christian Charity—Doing the Will of God—the Gospel hid to them that are lost.

It will be perceived, that, though there is not much speciality in the subjects, they are chiefly of one general character; and the selection of the Sermons, we are informed, was determined by the subjects, "and not at all by any conceit of excellence in their composition." Though there is a slight peculiarity in the author's view of Christianity, these subjects are presented, substantially, in the same light as in the ordinary ministrations of evangelical preachers. The doctrines are not stated with any remarkable precision, nor maintained with any steady process of argument. The composition is indeed, for the most part, quite loose and immethodical; a succession of thoughts, connected or not connected, as the case may happen—easily occurring to a mind not accustomed to any severity of intellectual discipline—and hastily thrown on paper just as they occurred. A large proportion of them are perfectly commonplace. Here and there they carry a degree of point and discrimination. A few of them are considerably raised and bold; and now and then they are extravagant, from carelessness or from system.

The whole strain of the Sermons indicates, we think, much

genuine piety and zeal, great familiarity with the scriptures (quoted, however, too much in masses), and very little personal ostentation. The exhortations are serious and earnest, and the whole language runs on in a free, inartificial manner. Our great complaint is, that there is but little accurate, sterling, useful thinking; but little to make any reader feel that he better comprehends any part of religion. There is also a great sameness of sentiment through the volume. And this is a natural consequence of that peculiarity we have alluded to, in the mode in which he contemplates revealed truth, and zealously insists that every Christian instructor should apprehend and display it. The peculiarity consists in a frequent express repetition, and a habitual systematical observance of a principle formed on a strained inference from the apostle's determination, expressed to the Corinthians, "not to know anything among them save Jesus Christ, and him crucified." It may be presumed that all enlightened and devout readers of the Bible must clearly perceive the grand pre-eminence of the doctrine of a Mediator among the doctrines of that revelation; must perceive that this great truth, or rather combination of truths (for it comprises in its very essence several truths in detail) throws a peculiar light over the whole system of moral and religious truths, and places them all in a certain relation to itself; and that therefore a Christian speculator must contemplate them, reason on them, and inculcate them, in that light and that relation, from a conviction that otherwise his view of them will be incomplete or deceptive. But what Mr. Jesse insists on, is something different from this. Nothing, to be sure, could well be stated with less precision than his view of the subject, though it is so often reverted to; and we cannot hope to make it intelligible by saying—that his principle is, that all religious and moral truth, at least all that a Christian can consistently regard or teach, is in some manner formally contained in, and absolutely of a piece with, the doctrine of a suffering Saviour; insomuch that no point of morals and religion can with propriety be argued or enforced, otherwise than as a constituent part of this comprehensive doctrine. Whatever may be the precise nature and extent of the principle, it aims to assert something much more than that the doctrine on all moral and theological subjects should be

so taught, as to be strictly in *coincidence with* the chief points in the theory of the mediatorship of Christ, so as to form consistent adjuncts to that theory, and compose, together with it, and in conformity to it, one wide and complicated, but harmonious system. It is obvious, even to Mr. Jesse, that all the vast assemblage of important propositions which constitute the grand whole of moral and religious truth, cannot be *identical* with those distinct propositions, which enounce specifically the mediatorship of Christ, or the several parts or views of that mediatorship; but he will have all those numerous propositions so *consubstantial* (if we may so express it) with these particular and comparatively few propositions, that all the diversified truths they express, or seem to express, shall be but modifications or parts of the doctrine enounced in these propositions respecting the mediatorship. Or, at last, all the truths that are fit for Christian use must so be consubstantial with that doctrine; and thus all right statement of religious and moral truth will strictly be, in substance, preaching Christ "crucified." We are aware that these lines of ours will appear extremely obscure, though we may think them sunbeams of light and precision compared with those of our author. If they do not convey something like his doctrine (we really cannot be certain of the identity), we wish that either it had been better explained, or all printed enlargement on it forborne.

The effect of such a principle, in its practical observance in teaching religion, will be, either the exclusion from notice of a great number of important truths and moral maxims held forth in the comprehensive instructions of the Bible, and deducible from just reasoning on its declarations; or a most laborious systematic endeavour—not to exhibit all the truths in harmony, on the grand basis of the mediatorial economy, but—to force them all into one form, of course to constrain some of them to seem to be different truths from what they really are—if there be not too much absurdity in such an expression. In either of these ways, the system of religion and morals will be rendered vastly narrower than the Bible, and presented to inquiring minds in a form which they must abjure their most established rules of right thinking in order even to understand.

